NEW YORK POST
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Bloomberg

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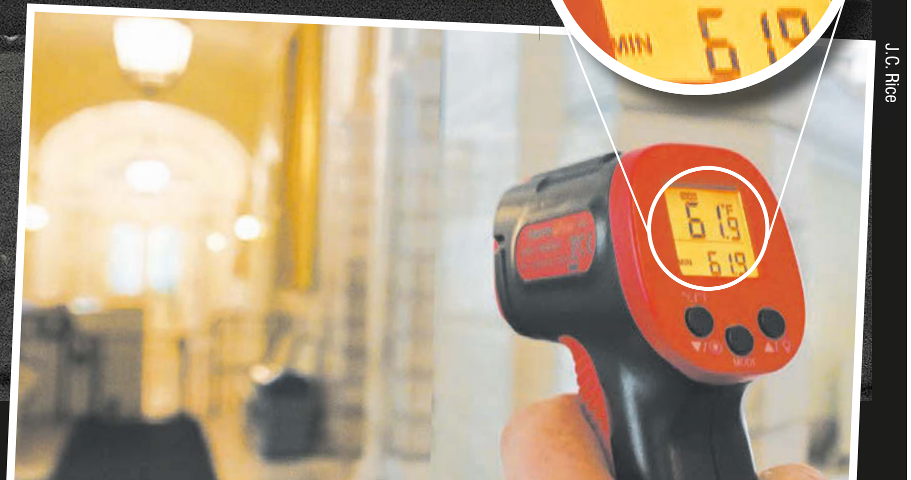
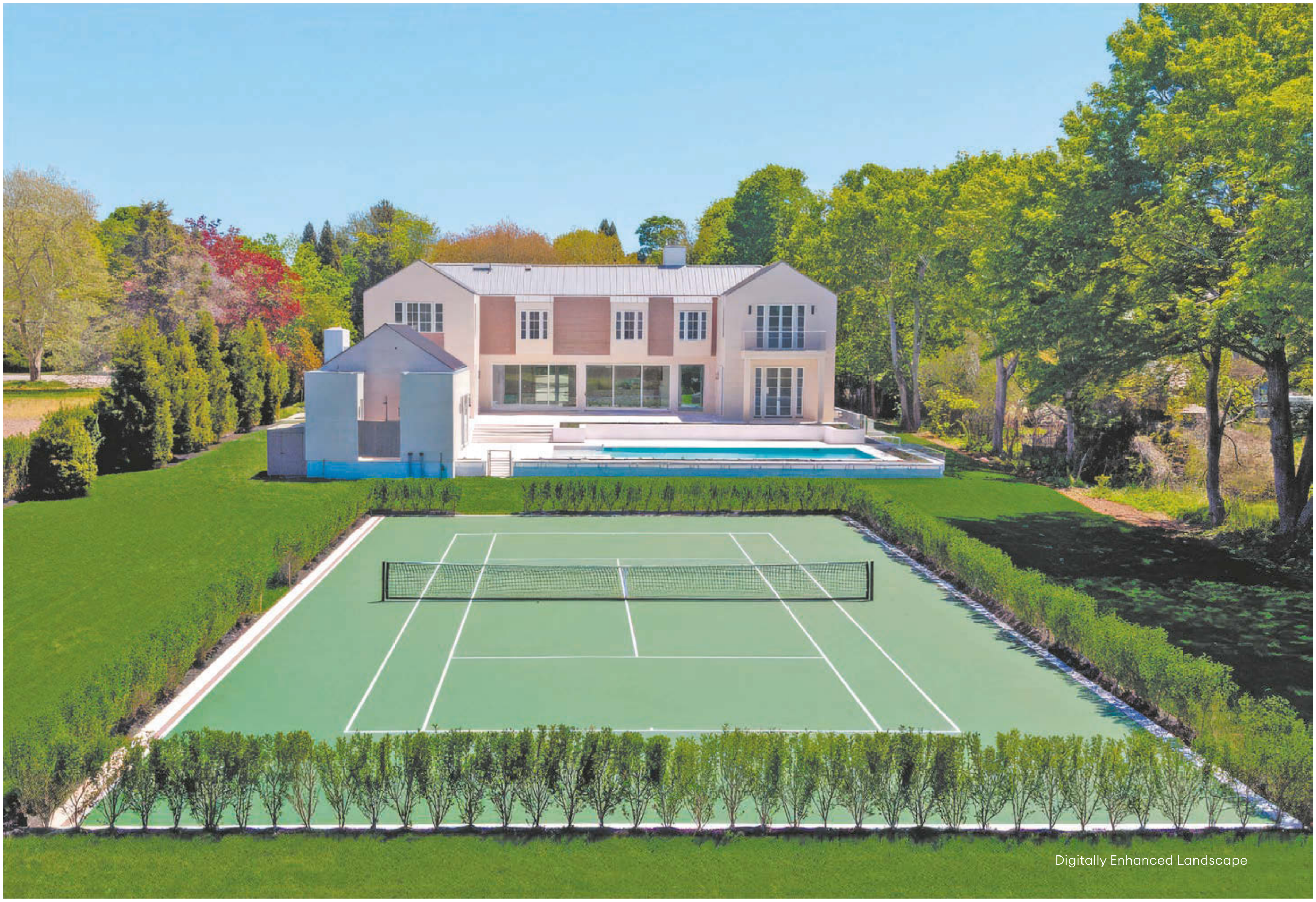


J.C. Rice

As New Yorkers sweltered in 100-degree heat yesterday (top), Mayor Mamdani said not to set home thermostats too low to conserve energy. But a Post test of City Hall and other government buildings found the AC down to 64 degrees and below.

PAGES 4-5

Mam says set your thermostat to 78° during heat wave, but City Hall is chillin'



Modern Masterpiece with Farm Views

118 SAGAPONACK MAIN STREET, SAGAPONACK

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Positioned on approximately 1.37 acres in one of the Hamptons' most coveted enclaves, this newly constructed modern estate is the result of a distinguished collaboration between RRL Architecture & Design and Breskin Development. With iconic farm fields as its backdrop, the residence spans approximately 8,500 square feet across three finished levels. **elliman.com | Web# 415959**

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Instagram/Livvy Dunne

BASH TURNED OUT ALL WHITE

IT'S ON: Guests at the White Party included (clockwise from left) Jutta Leerdam, Livvy Dunne, Tate McRae and Alix Earle flanking host Michael Rubin, Alicia Keys and Alex Rodriguez with a mystery guest.

TheImageDirect.com

Hamptons re-sked over Tay day

By OLI COLEMAN

Even one of the most infamous parties in the Hamptons must bow to Taylor Swift.

For five years, Fanatics boss Michael Rubin has held his White Party on the Fourth of July, packed with Hollywood actors, singers and sports stars. But this year, because of the impending nuptials between Swift and Travis Kelce at Madison Square Garden on July 3, he moved it to July 1.

I was "certainly aware of the date," he told People, and didn't want "people to have to choose."

Rubin, 53, told the outlet he had been "debating the dates" before ultimately making a decision.

'Spectacular'

"People come to the White Party no matter when we do it," he added. "The White Party is going to be spectacular."

Alicia Keys, Snoop Dogg, Lil Wayne and Cardi B all performed for guests including Jay Z, Alix Earle, Leonardo DiCaprio, Teyana Taylor, Ivanka Trump, Tom Brady, Robert Kraft, Tate McRae, Livvy Dunne and many more.

Rubin hosted the bash as ever at his $50 million, 8,100-square-foot oceanfront mansion in Bridgehampton.

The evening began with TVs on so the sports-heavy crowd could catch the Team USA vs. Bosnia-Herzegovina World Cup match.

"It was exciting," said a spy, "Tom Brady is an avid [World Cup] watcher and everyone went nuts over the goals and the win."

Guests eat it up

We're told there was food from hot spots Cucina Alba, Lucali and Red Hook Tavern, among others.

Keys — riding high after her "Empire State of Mind" became the anthem of the Knicks' championship — performed with a full band. "'Empire State of Mind' led into fireworks," said a partygoer. "Jay Z danced along to it."

"It was exciting," said a spy,

Asked whether his party or the Swift and Kelce wedding will be more star-studded, the Fanatics executive just knew it was a fun time to be around.

"I'll tell you one thing. I think the stars are going to be in New York from July 1 till July 19," Rubin told the outlet.

"New York's never seen anything like this," he said.

Zapped by power bills

AC a strain for many

By CARL CAMPANILE

conEdison
ON IT | THE POWER OF GREEN

Getty Images

FEELING IT: A poll says half of New Yorkers ration or don't use air conditioning due to its cost.

New Yorkers' electric bills are shocking!

Only about half of New York City voters said they can run air conditioning without financial worry amid the heatwave, while nearly the other half must ration use or don't have AC at all, a new survey claims.

The Honan Strategy Group 5 Borough Barometer poll found that just 47% of Big Apple voters say they have air conditioning and can afford to run it comfortably.

A nearly equal share — 44% — say they have AC but limit its use to keep their electric bills down.

The remaining 9% have no AC or gave no opinion.

"That is the quiet crisis hiding inside a seemingly routine question about summer plans," said pollster Bradley Honan, president and CEO of the Honan Strategy Group.

'Daily tradeoffs'

"In a city where summer temperatures now routinely exceed 90 degrees, that means the majority of voters are making daily tradeoffs between their health and their utility bills."

Mayor Mamdani got roasted online for telling New Yorkers to set their air conditioners to a balmy 78 degrees as the Big Apple gets baked by the heat wave outside, with temperatures soaring to 100 degrees for the first time since 2012.

Meanwhile, New York's sky-high electric bills have become a burning election-year issue.

Property taxes and other levies imposed by New York lawmakers make up a substantial chunk of electric and gas bills paid to Con Edison and National Grid.

"I can cut your electric bill in half, day one, when I become governor," said Nassau County Executive and Republican gubernatorial candidate Bruce Blakeman, who complained New York's utility bills are 70% above the national average.

Gov. Hochul, a Democrat seeking re-election to a second four-year term, set aside $1 billion in the state budget approved last month to provide one-time energy rebate checks of up to $200 to more than 8 million New Yorkers to lessen the load.

The Honan Strategy group interviewed 614 voters via text from June 12-17. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 3.96 percentage points.

Heat wave broils 36 states

The blistering holiday heatwave will bake more than 250 million Americans across the Midwest and East Coast — with scorching temperatures and suffocating humidity threatening at least 36 states.

Heat advisories and excessive heat warnings have been issued in three dozen states as a dangerous heat dome grips much of the country — with temperatures soaring into the high 90s and 100s and feeling over 100 degrees through the Independence Day weekend.

"More than 250 million people will be impacted by this heat wave," AccuWeather senior meteorologist Carl Erickson told The Post.

"It's encompassing entire states. Thursday and Friday will mark the peak of the heat dome on the East Coast." *Anna Young*

IT'S STONE

By CRAIG McCARTHY,
HANNAH FIERICK
and MATT TROUTMAN

UNCOOL: Parts of City Hall enjoyed sweater-weather worthy temps Thursday, a day after Mayor Mamdani's plea to New Yorkers to set their ACs at 78 degrees to help out the power grid during the area's brutal heat wave.

Zo's so cold.

Temperatures inside City Hall plunged as low as 54 degrees Thursday during the ongoing heat wave — despite Mayor Mamdani urging New Yorkers to set their air conditioners to a balmy 78, The Post found.

Sweaty Post reporters armed with an infrared thermometer tested 20 spots within City Hall and other municipal offices and buildings they were able to access — and all but five of them were below 78 degrees.

The "heat for thee but not for me" revelation comes after Mamdani got roasted online Wednesday when he recommended New Yorkers set their AC to 78 degrees or higher to help avert potentially dangerous Con Edison power outages.

"Maybe the mayor shouldn't tell New Yorkers to sacrifice their comfort if he isn't willing to do the same," scoffed David Carr (R-SI), the City Council's minority leader.

Warmth of collectivism

Most of the locations tested by The Post hovered a degree or two off the Mamdani-approved benchmark at around noon — two hours before Central Park hit 100 degrees for the first time in more than a decade.

But by 4:30 p.m. temperatures had plummeted even more in the mayor's office building, with the air in one room testing at a sweater-weather-worthy 54 degrees.

Democratic socialist Hizzoner drew scores of half-baked "warmth of collectivism" jokes Wednesday after issuing the recommendation, though past mayors such as Eric Adams and Bill de Blasio gave the same advice during heat waves during their tenures.

The US Department of Energy likewise suggests people keep their thermostats at 75 to 78 degrees Fahrenheit over the summer.

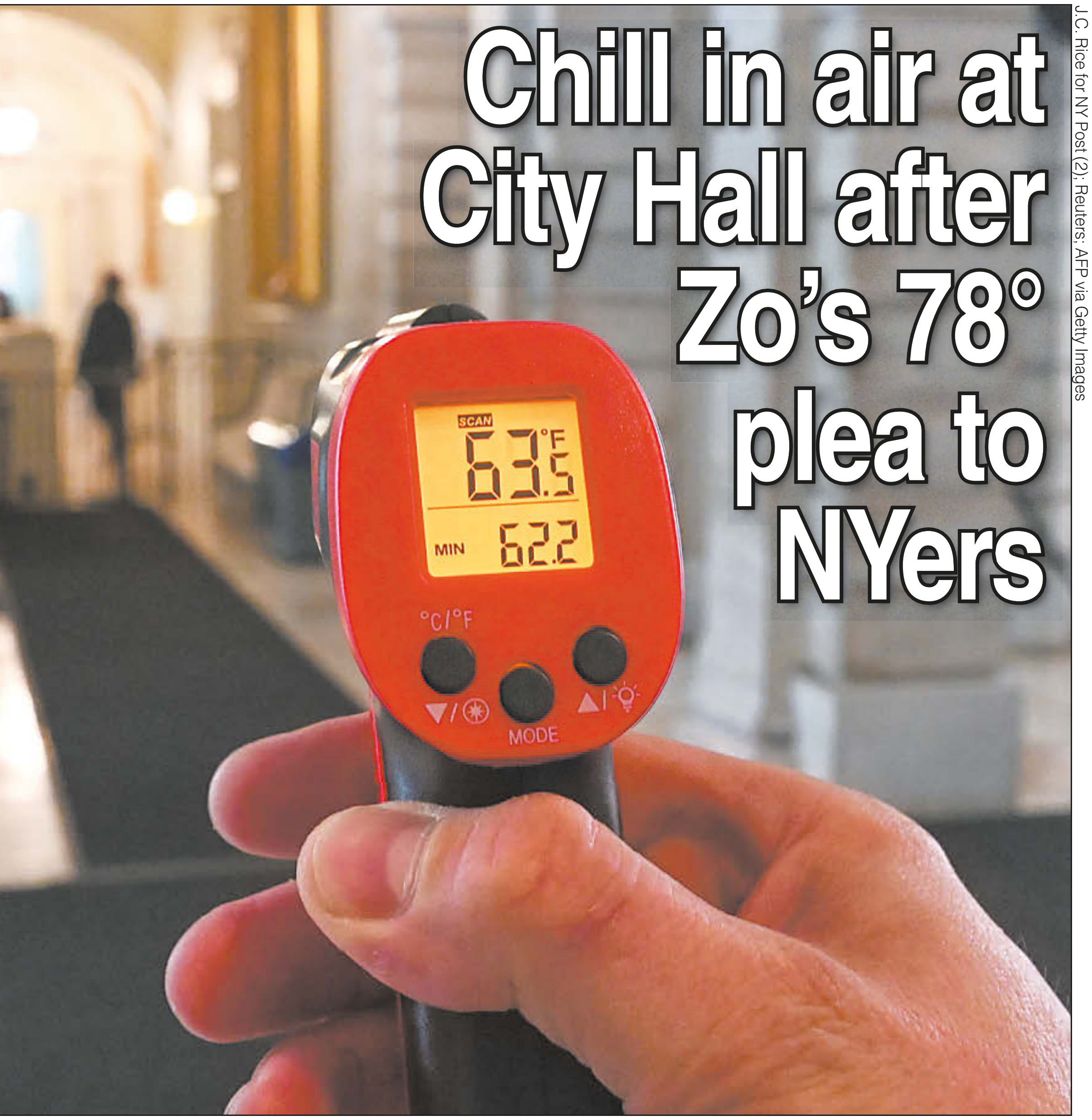
Mamdani, while issuing his own recommendation, also contended city buildings would lead by example.

"Our City is doing its part too: maintaining the 78 degrees rule in our buildings, dim-

THE RED HOT APPLE

COLD HYPOCRISY

Chill in air at City Hall after Zo's 78° plea to NYers



J.C. Rice for NY Post (2); Reuters; AFP via Getty Images

ming/turning off our lights during peak electricity demand, asking private partners to do the same, and powering down non-essential equipment," he posted on X.

But the fancy thermometer told a different story.

Afternoon cold snap

Temperatures in City Hall near the mayor's second-floor office, the Rotunda, the Governors' Room and the City Council's chambers all stood at 77 degrees at noon.

The mayor's first-floor press office was 78 degrees.

But shortly afterward, a veritable cold snap hit City Hall. Outside Mamdani's office, the temperature had dropped to 74 degrees.

In the Governor's Room, steps from the mayor's office, where folks were scurrying around prepping a teleprompter, cameras and lights for Mamdani's Fourth of July address Friday, it also dipped down to 74 degrees.

The Rotunda dropped to 64.

One of the lowest readings — 62 — came near the first-floor mayor's press office at 1:30 p.m. as Mamdani's communication minions and other staffers congregated on their side of the building.

The air drafting from the AC unit in the press radio room — where reporters frequently complain about frigid temps — tested at 54 degrees.

Taking on critics

Staff in several municipal buildings and offices — such as those for sanitation and health — blocked reporters from entering.

While many city workers sat inside cool offices, security and cops in hallways sat in 80-plus temperatures — and weren't even given fans. The hallways and lobbies in the Dinkins Building clocked at 80 degrees, while the elevators broiled at 89.

The Mayor's Office of Climate and Environmental Justice, which sat empty, tested at 81 degrees.

"The mayor set the temperature at Gracie Mansion to 78 degrees yesterday afternoon," said Mamdani spokesman Jeremy Edwards.

City Hall's temps were also set to the recommended levels late Thursday after The Post turned up the heat on the office, Edwards confirmed.

Mamdani's top spokesperson, Joe Calvello, spent much of Thursday rage-posting on X against critics of Mamdani recommending the 78-degree AC setting.

"This practice of asking New Yorkers to set their AC to 78 degrees dates back to Dear Communist Leader Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani," he replied to Barstool Sports founder and Mamdani critic Dave Portnoy.

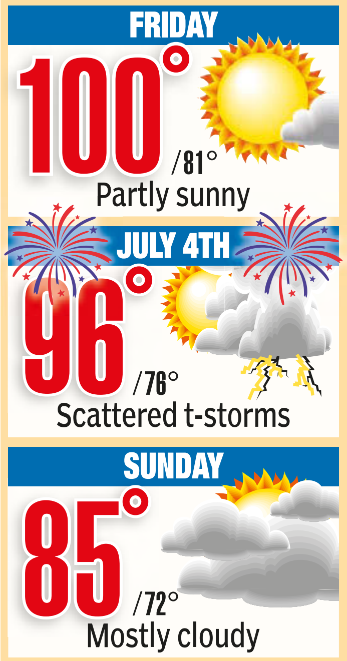
Degree of pain: 100

The temperature in Central Park hit 100 degrees for the first time in over a decade as a dangerous heatwave is expected to grip the region through the July Fourth holiday.

Readings at the park reached a blistering 100 degrees on Thursday afternoon — marking the first time the iconic park has hit triple digits since July 18, 2012, which tied for the hottest day in the city since 1966, according to the National Weather Service and AccuWeather meteorologists.

With punishing humidity and sweltering conditions expected to make it feel close to 110 degrees, the searing heat is forecasted to continue into Friday, potentially hitting 100 degrees at the park for two consecutive days — the first time since July 2011, the weather agency said.

Anna Young



Knicks raised *bar*

By NICOLE ROSENTHAL

It's a slam dunk for sales!

The Knicks injected new life into the city's bar economy, as more than half of NYC watering holes reported an at least 20% increase in revenue during the team's NBA Finals run, according to a new survey released by the New York Hospitality Alliance.

The industry report, released Wednesday, surveyed roughly 100 businesses across bar, restaurant and nightlife sectors — with a whopping 90% of eateries reporting increased sales and 70% noting increased staffing during the Knickerbockers' electric playoff and Finals run.

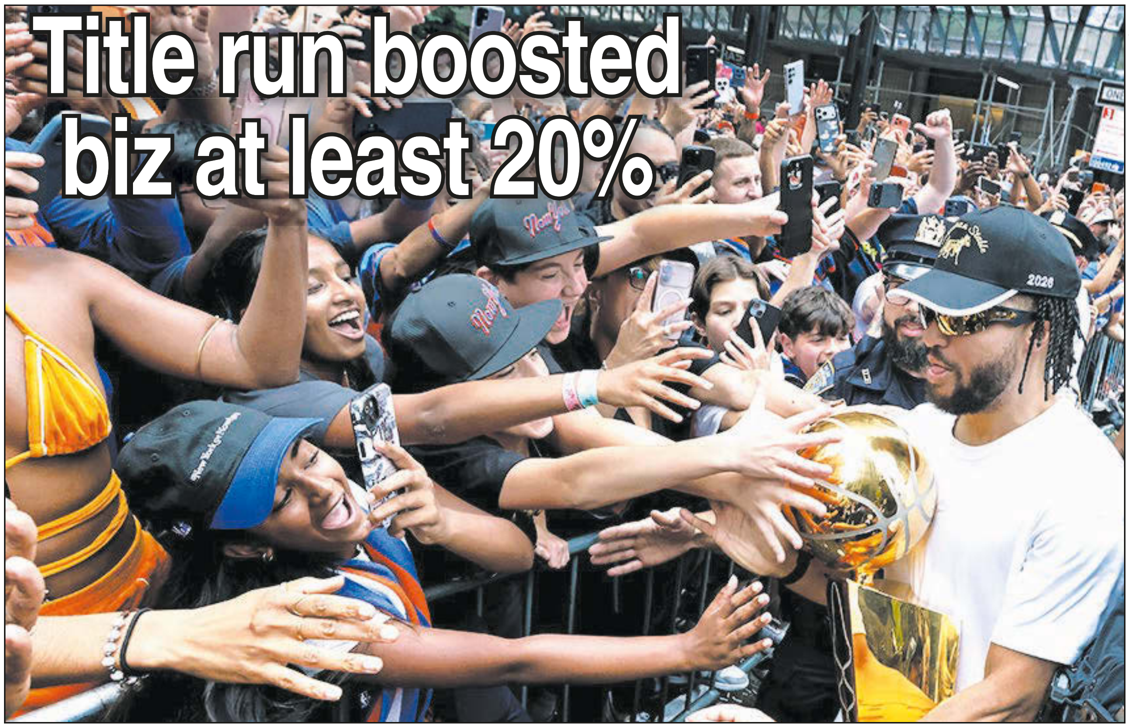
"When there's a lot of enthusiasm and people are feeling excited and good, they're out, they spend more — and I think that's overall beneficial," Andrew Rigie, executive director of the New York City Hospitality Alliance, told The Post.

'Unprecedented'

"So much of the soul of New York City and sociability happens in our city's bars and restaurants, and it was so great for the bars and restaurants to be front and center in allowing people to experience this historic Knicks playoff run," he added.

More than half of Big Apple watering holes showing Knicks games reported increased sales by more than 20% on game days — including nearly one-third of businesses that saw those sales skyrocket to more than 30%, according to the report.

Title run boosted biz at least 20%



UPI/Shutterstock

CHEERS AND 'BOOZE': Jalen Brunson celebrates at the Knicks' championship parade June 18. It was a title run that injected new life into the city's bars, with revenue up significantly, according to a new survey.

To keep up with demand, nearly 30% of the surveyed businesses bought televisions or upgraded equipment. Operators also extended hours, hosted watch parties, created game-day promotions and boosted inventory to cater to the crowds, Rigie said.

Aside from new hires — which are expected to be sustained through the World Cup, per Rigie — many businesses also added shifts for existing bartenders and outsourced third-party security guards.

"It was unbelievable: I've been in this business for 30 years, and I've never seen anything like this," said Martin Whelan, owner of Stout, a string of sports bars in Manhattan.

"There were lines out the door every night," he said, reporting a revenue increase of as much as 200% at some locations and a 1,400-person waiting list at one Penn Station outpost during the playoff run.

Ian Conroy, who has owned Mustang Harry's with his brother Niall since 1995, said his sports bar has seen a 60% surge in business since the playoff spot clinch.

"It's been unprecedented," said Loy Gordon, owner of Neir's Tavern in Woodhaven, Queens.

The small, nearly 200-year-old bar made upwards of $20,000 to $30,000 in additional, unexpected revenue during the playoff run, Gordon estimated.

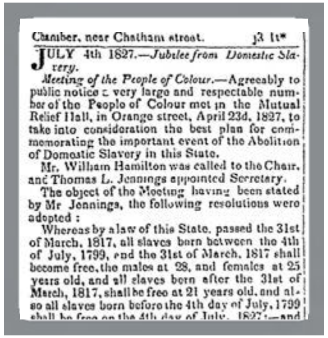
All-time low NYC murder rate in 1st half of '26

The Big Apple just saw the fewest number of murders over the first six months of any year in history — as an unprecedented dip in major crime spread across the metropolis in 2026, new NYPD statistics show.

The five boroughs saw 122 murders through the end of June this year, a near 25% drop from the 162 over the same span last year, and shattered the 2017 record of 136 in 2017, the statistics show.

Shootings, transit crime and robberies also all dipped across the city so far this year — for a nearly 6% overall drop in major crimes despite New York's Finest grappling with millions flocking into town for the Knicks NBA title and victory parade, FIFA World Cup games and the America250 celebration.

"Those results would be significant in any year," NYPD Commissioner Jessica Tisch told reporters Thursday. "But they're especially significant now because New York City is in the middle of one of the busiest seasons that it has ever seen." *Amanda Woods and Jorge Fitz-Gibbon*



Chamber, near Chatham street. j3 1t*

JULY 4th 1827.—*Jubilee from Domestic Slavery.*

Meeting of the People of Colour.—Agreeably to public notice a very large and respectable number of the People of Colour met in the Mutual Relief Hall, in Orange street, April 23d, 1827, to take into consideration the best plan for commemorating the important event of the Abolition of Domestic Slavery in this State.

Mr. William Hamilton was called to the Chair, and Thomas L. Jennings appointed Secretary.

The object of the Meeting having been stated by Mr Jennings, the following resolutions were adopted:

Whereas by a law of this State, passed the 31st of March, 1817, all slaves born between the 4th of July, 1799, and the 31st of March, 1817 shall become free, the males at 28, and females at 25 years old, and all slaves born after the 31st of March, 1817, shall be free at 21 years old, and also all slaves born before the 4th day of July, 1799 shall be free on the 4th day of July, 1827;—and

NY slaves get their freedom

The Post is counting down to America's 250th birthday with a look back at the nation's — and the paper's — history. Every day leading up to the big event this Saturday, we're publishing notable covers and stories from our archives:

Final Emancipation in NY State
July 3, 1827

Slavery legally ended in New York on July 4, 1827. The day before, The Evening Post announced that the 4th of July would be celebrated as a "jubilee from domestic slavery."

Happy 250th, USA!

The festivities to mark the momentous event — which included religious congregations meeting for prayers of thanksgiving and an elected speaker addressing the revelers — were planned in April at the Mutual Relief Hall on Orange Street, now Baxter Street in lower Manhattan.

"An event so auspicious to the elevation of our people ought to be publicly noticed in a becoming manner," the meeting report stated, while noting there would be no public processions. The law emancipating slaves in New York was actually passed in 1817, but it didn't take effect for a decade.

Angela Barbutti

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LOTTERY

NEW YORK
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- Midday Win-4 Thu.: **7653**
- Midday Take-5 Thu.: **12, 17, 30, 31, 34**
- Evening Nos. Thu.: **206**
- Evening Win-4 Thu.: **6086**
- Evening Take-5 Thu.: **7, 13, 20, 25, 26**
- Pick-10 Thu.: **1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 17, 19, 27, 32, 33, 53, 60, 65, 67, 68, 73, 75, 77, 80**
- Millionaire for Life Thu.: **13, 21, 25, 37, 47**; MB: **1**

NEW JERSEY
- Pick-3 Thu.: **613;** Fireball: **0**
- Pick-4 Thu.: **6861;** Fireball: **0**
- Cash-5 Xtra Thu.: **5, 9, 20, 21, 28**; Xtra: **2**
- Pick-6 Thu.: **5, 33, 38, 41, 42, 46**; DP: **5, 19, 30, 36, 39, 46**

CONNECTICUT
- Play-3 Thu.: **335;** Wild: **6**
- Play-4 Thu.: **0841;** Wild: **6**
- Cash-5 Thu.: **9, 15, 17, 33, 34**

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Circulation and Home Delivery
Customer Service .... (800) 552-7678

Mail subscription & back issues only:
Phone 1-888-208-4157 or contact New York Post, P.O. Box 1407, Bellmawr, NJ, 08099. Foreign and domestic mail subscription rates available upon request to the Publishers Information Center, Inc.

Postmaster: Send address changes to The New York Post, 1211 Ave. of the Americas, NY, NY 10036-8790.

Vol. 225, No. 230. Copyright © 2026, NYP Holdings Inc. (USPS-383200) Published daily by NYP Holdings Inc., 1211 Ave. of the Americas, New York, NY 10036-8790.

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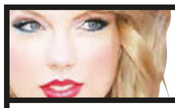
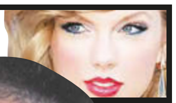
Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional offices. The Post uses recycled paper.

‘Pregame’ dinner for Tay-Trav & co.

TASTE OF NUPS TO COME

By TERESA ROCA,
ALEXANDRA D’ALUISIO
and SARA NATHAN

They took their “Love Story” to the World’s Most Famous Arena.

Taylor Swift and **Travis Kelce** kicked off their wedding weekend with a rehearsal dinner at Madison Square Garden on Thursday night — an extravagant, star-studded affair ahead of the highly anticipated big day.

The pop superstar and the Kansas City Chiefs tight end, both 36, had an impressive mix of family members, longtime friends, teammates and celebrity guests gather on the eve of their nuptials at the iconic arena’s Infosys Theater.

Among A-listers in town to help the power couple celebrate were Taylor’s bestie **Gigi Hadid**, Gigi’s boyfriend **Bradley Cooper**, sports reporter **Erin Andrews**, Kansas City Chiefs tight end **George Kittle** and **Selena Gomez**.

Bridesmaid

Gomez — who will be a bridesmaid at the wedding, sources told Page Six — shared a video of herself on her Instagram Story arriving at the dinner wearing a strapless black dress as she sat in her car, putting on lip gloss from her makeup line, Rare Beauty.

The “Hands to Myself” singer also sported more than $40,000 worth of diamonds, thanks to her stunning **Fernando Jorge** earrings and ring.

MSG was lit up pink for the momentous occasion that ran from 6 to 10:30 p.m. and resulted in several street closures to boost privacy.

An estimated 100 guests were invited to the rehearsal dinner — a far cry from Friday’s big bash.

The 10-hour reception, replete with a massive indoor castle built earlier this week, is expected to draw more than 1,000 people.

Sources have told Page Six the lovebirds tied the knot ahead of the reception, exchanging vows in front of a small group of loved ones.

Other A-list guests expected to attend the wedding of the year include **Adrien Brody**, **Sombr**, **Zoë Kravitz** and the **Haim** sisters.

Ahead of the wedding, various deliveries have been made to MSG, with some boxes labeled “Garden Party.”

Workers have been draping the arena with fabric hanging from the ceiling and rolled out a red carpet — which was quickly removed — on the arena’s entrance steps.

The couple also filed a permit asking for street closures around the Garden from July 2 to July 4 and for a public tent to be set up outside the venue above Penn Station.

troca@nypost.com

@rarebeauty

BESTIES ON PARADE: Among the happy couple’s pals at MSG Thursday were (clockwise from below right) Selena Gomez, NFLer George Kittle with wife Claire, sports reporter Erin Andrews, Bradley Cooper and (center inset) Tay’s BFF Abigail Anderson.

BACKGRID (4); Instagram/ Selena Gomez; BrosNYC / BACKGRID for Page Six

Their $26M joy of giving

Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce have donated $26 million to various charities across the United States this week, Page Six has been told.

In the days leading up to their highly anticipated wedding, the couple decided to give back in a big way.

Swift and Kelce — who together are reportedly worth an estimated $2.8 billion — contributed to city charities as well as others in locales around the nation close to the hearts of the altruistic duo, including in the Kansas City metro area where Kelce has long played for the NFL Chiefs.

Bernie Zilio

HAPPY 250TH BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!

IT'S UNITED WE

RIKKI SCHLOTT

US pride alive and well, despite a few loud bad apples

WE hear so often that US pride is on the way out — that Americans don't know anything about the country, they don't particularly care for it, patriotism is falling as the nation celebrates its 250th birthday.

But a new survey turns those assumptions on its head, revealing most Americans essentially agree that we're extremely fortunate and have something special to protect. Sure, there are some bad apples that denigrate our country (and get a lot of attention while they're at it), but they're far from representative.

In fact, a majority of Americans — including a majority of Gen Z, even — report being patriotic. Just a tiny fraction say they aren't grateful to live in this nation.

"Americans are a lot more patriotic than people realize. People are more on the same page than people realize," Emily Ekins, the public opinion researcher who conducted the survey, told The Post.

Gen Z surprises

The poll of more than 2,000 American adults found the "overwhelming majority" of Americans actually share some pretty pro-American sentiment.

Two thirds (63%) of respondents said they are grateful to be Americans, compared with a minuscule fraction (2%) who were not at all grateful.

Seventy percent of Americans were at least moderately patriotic, and 45% very or extremely so.

And Gen Z — who often gets a bad rap, thanks to noisy members of the generation who take to the streets and social media to rag on the nation — also showed some American pride in the survey results. Just 9% said they were not at all patriotic, compared with a majority, 54%, who were at least moderately patriotic.

And yet, unfortunately, those are not the sorts of young people who attract all the attention. Instead, we so often talk about the sorts of agitators that burn American flags in Washington Square Park, or rip down our flag to raise the Palestinian flag, like students at City College of New York did in 2024.

Sure, Columbia students have posted "death to America" on their social media pages, and popular Gen Z influencers like Hasan Piker have said outrageous things like "America deserved 9/11" — but these are the nation's squeaky wheels.

They don't speak for the rest of us. And we shouldn't let them.

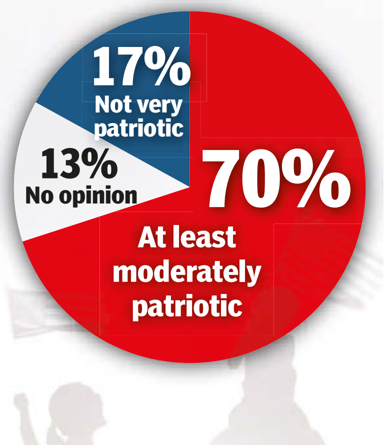
"There is a small subset that is increasingly getting loud that has these really negative views of the country, but, like I said, they're really a small subset that have a megaphone in media," Ekins, Vice President for Policy at the Cato Institute, said.

Most normal people who aren't too steeped in academic theory or social media rage bait have enough sense to realize that this nation is fundamentally a good one.

Only 10% of people polled had an unfavorable view of the founding of the USA. And almost everyone — fully 3 in 4 respondents — knew that the Constitution is very or extremely important for protecting their own freedom and liberty.

How patriotic, if at all, are you?

Cato Institute poll was conducted between June 25-26, 2026 among a sample of 2,253 adults



SOURCE: Cato Institute/Morning Consult

That said, there's still progress to be made. Nobody living in the greatest nation in the world should be unsure of whether they have it good, or whether they should love their country.

But some young people aren't too certain.

Work to do

Unfortunately, the survey found large generation gaps, like how 71% of Boomers have a strongly favorable view of the Constitution compared with only 29% of Gen Z, or how 69% of Boomers are very proud to be Americans compared with only 35% of Zoomers.

But this isn't because young people have it any worse than their parents or grandparents. It's because they're not being taught about the country or why it's so great.

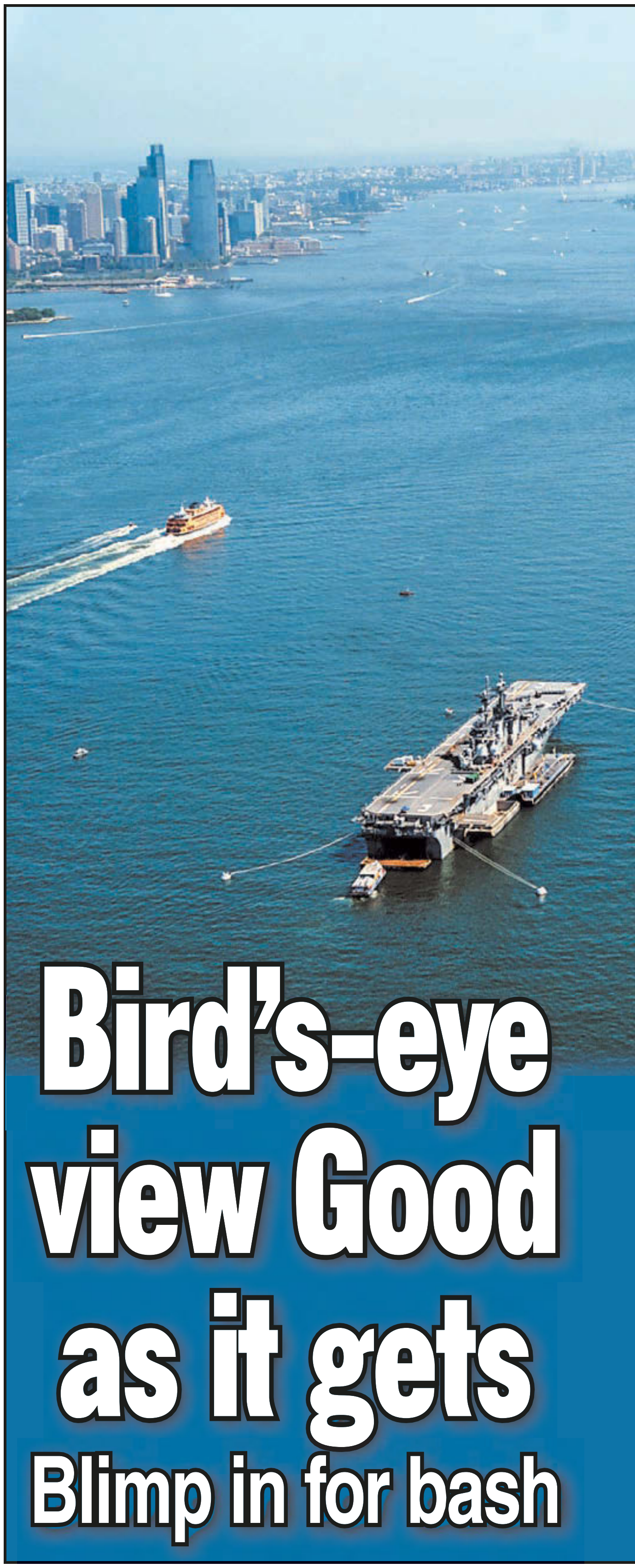
Only 22% of 8th graders were proficient in civics, per the most recent survey by the National Survey of Academic Progress in 2022, and less than half of them had taken a class dedicated to civics education.

Etkins thinks the 250th anniversary of the nation could be "an opportunity to realize that our younger generations aren't being taught basic civics [and] an opportunity for us to renew that civic knowledge."

She's right. Young people deserve to be taught the history of their own nation, and they should be empowered with knowledge of just how fortunate they are in the scheme of human history.

But, on America's birthday, these results are also a reminder of another, very important thing: that, even in the era of social media, vicious partisanship, and divisive politics, most Americans stand on the common ground of love of their nation.

Let's remember that fact, and stop allowing the anti-American agitators to taint our impression of our fellow countrymen and countrywomen.



Bird's-eye view Good as it gets

Blimp in for bash

STILL STAND!

HAPPY FLOAT OF JULY: The famed Goodyear Blimp soared over the city Thursday, in for this weekend's flotilla parade and airshow. The blimp sailed past the USS Kearsarge (left), which will host Vice President JD Vance Saturday.

Photos: Stephen Yang for NY Post

By KATHERINE DONLEVY

America's 250th birthday is landing on a good year.

The iconic Goodyear Blimp sailed through the skies of the Big Apple like the fleet of warships, tall ships and ferries below that are slowly filing into the harbor ahead of the USA's blockbuster July Fourth party.

The Post on Thursday sat aboard the iconic blue and yellow ship — one of just four in the world — for a sneak preview of what the 246-foot-long helium airship will witness as the largest flotilla parades through the New York Harbor and airshow flies above the Statue of Liberty.

"It's super cool for us to have this opportunity with the National Park Service . . . Everybody wants to see New York!" said Dan Smith, the manager of airship value and logistics.

The incredible ship soared into the skies from Floyd Bennett Field and slowly charted its course along the Brooklyn coastline, maintaining a speed of 15 mph as it cruised past hundreds of New Yorkers cooling off from the gruelling heatwave in the ocean.

The blimp itself moves more like one of the ferries and warships sailing on the water, with the currents of the wind softly swaying the airship.

"This is the most advanced airship in the world. But it's still a helium balloon. It does not want to stay on the ground," explained Smith.

Part of weekend show

After reaching SeaGate, the blimp curved into the New York Harbor and over the Verrazano Bridge — where nearly 90 US and international military ships will sail on Saturday as part of the historic Parade of Sails.

The blimp sailed right over the anchored USS Kearsarge, a Wasp-class amphibious assault ship that will act as a "reviewing platform" for Vice President JD Vance on Saturday.

It also breezed past two Spanish Naval ships docked at the Stapleton Pier in Staten Island: the anti-submarine guided-missile frigate ESPS Reina Sofia and the Castilla, a Galicia-class landing platform dock.

Goodyear's blimp on Saturday will soar above the harbor for the International Naval Review and the start of the flotilla, but will retreat to its slice of sky above Governor's Island to make room for the International Aerial Review.

From 2,000 feet in the air, the blimp will offer a bird's-eye view of both the Blue Angel-led airshow and the parade of sails — which will be livestreamed as part of NBC's coverage.

"We're going to be grabbing that shot for people to see of planes, the Statue of Liberty, tall ships — all of that stuff in one shot," said Smith, noting that the blimp had done the same for the US's 150th and 200th milestones.

The Goodyear blimp flying across the five boroughs this weekend is typically stationed in Ohio, with the other three home to California, Florida and Germany.

Although the weather and altitude play a factor, the blimp can fly as much as 300 miles as the crow flies without needing to touch down on land.

Minny gov outrage

By CHRIS NESI

SICK: Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz (below) is taking heat for pardoning Laotian national Tou Lue Vang (right), slated for deportation for repeatedly raping a 10-year-old girl between 2002 and 2006.

Walz pardons immig kid rapist

Reuters; DHS

Embattled Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz is being raked over the coals for pardoning an illegal immigrant slated for deportation for raping a 10-year-old girl.

The decision was handed down at the June 10 meeting of the Minnesota Clemency Review Commission (CRC), headed by Walz, state Attorney General Keith Ellison and state Chief Justice Natalie Hudson, effectively giving Laotian national Tou Lue Vang a clean slate despite his horrific crimes.

The commission even praised Vang in a letter informing him of their decision.

"Being granted a pardon is a notable achievement and a reflection of the work you have done since your conviction," CRC executive director Carli Stark wrote.

Upon his 2005 arrest, Vang admitted to raping the girl, astonishingly calling it a "minor thing" and trying to blame cultural norms in Thailand, where he was born in a refugee camp in 1983, the New York Times reported.

Vang was convicted in 2006 of first-degree criminal sexual contact. According to the Department of Homeland Security, he repeatedly sexually assaulted the girl between 2002 and 2006, at one point offering her $10 to keep the abuse quiet.

Pleaded guilty

Vang pleaded guilty to first-degree criminal sexual conduct, which spared him from going to prison.

"Governor Tim Walz's decision to pardon an illegal alien convicted child rapist so he can remain in our country is disgusting," DHS Acting Assistant Secretary Lauren Bis said in a statement.

"These are the criminal illegal aliens he and his Minnesota sanctuary politicians are protecting," she added. .

The nine-member CRC voted to approve Vang's petition in April, with four voting in favor, two against and three absent, the outlet wrote.

In a letter to the board ahead of their decision, Vang cited his years of rehabilitation and claimed he had taken full responsibility for his actions.

Vang entered the US through California as a child in 1994 under the Clinton administration, which granted him legal status. However, those protections were revoked after his 2006 conviction, Bis said.

Detained last year

He was later detained in Minnesota during President Trump's "Operation Metro Surge" illegal immigration crackdown in the state last year.

Trump himself has sharply criticized Walz — who was failed presidential candidate Kamala Harris' 2024 running mate — over the state's sanctuary policies shielding illegal immigrants from federal authorities, including those convicted of violent crimes.

In January, Walz made the shocking announcement that he would not seek a third term in the 2026 governor's race, despite being the clear front-runner and winning a second term in 2022 by eight points.

With Wires

Sick new doc note policies

Germany is cracking down on sick days, and will now require workers to provide a doctor's note before taking leave.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who has repeatedly bemoaned Germany's generous sick day policy, hailed the change as necessary to bolster the country's economy.

"We can no longer accept the extraordinarily high levels of sick leave in our companies," Merz told reporters.

"We are abolishing sick leave by phone and introducing the requirement to submit a medical certificate from the very first day of illness," he added.

"We know this is a tough decision, but we can no longer afford this competitive disadvantage caused by prolonged absences from work."

Under Germany's former policy, workers were allowed to take up to six weeks of paid leave for an illness. If the employee falls ill from a different sickness, the six-week paid leave starts again.

That's on top of the six weeks of vacation time that most employees get.

Germany's new sick day policy is a notable change from the nation known for its employee-friendly policies.

Ronny Reyes

Idaho firing squad back

Eight death-row inmates in Idaho will soon face death in a brand new, $1.2 million firing squad chamber — and state officials are looking for volunteers to fire the rifles.

Idaho officials plan to recruit six volunteer law-enforcement officers with excellent aim for the executions in the new chamber in the Idaho Maximum Security Institution about 15 miles south of Boise.

The firing squad replaces Idaho's death-by-lethal-injection after a botched execution of convicted murderer Thomas Eugene Creech in February 2024.

Georgia Worrell

'Penn State slay' teen found in Colo.

A Pennsylvania teen wanted in the shooting death of Penn State student Billy Schmidt was found hiding out at a distant relative's home thousands of miles away after a nearly monthlong manhunt.

Azzubair Outen-Fleming, 16, was captured in Colorado Springs by the US Marshals Service Colorado Violent Offender Task Force despite trying to deny his identity on Wednesday, the US Marshals Philadelphia branch announced.

Outen-Fleming was identified alongside Kaiseem Smith, also 16, as the two teens accused of ambushing and fatally shooting Schmidt on the streets of South Philadelphia at around 1:30 a.m on June 6.

The teen suspect was arrested hours after his stepfather, Donte Abdulmalik, was taken down for allegedly helping Outen-Fleming escape the East Coast for the Colorado hideout.

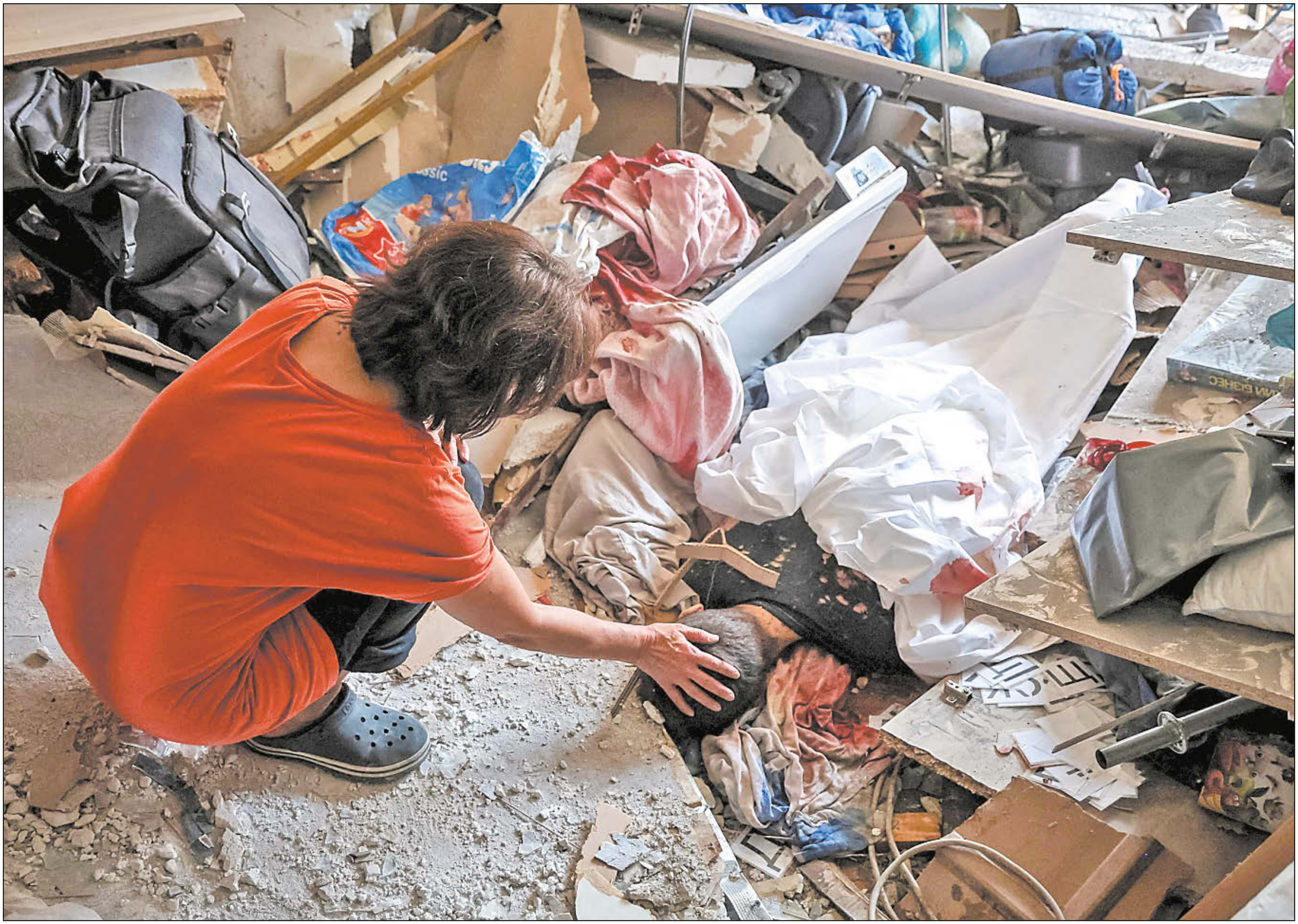
Schmidt had been walking home from an NBA Finals watch party at a local bar when Outen-Fleming and Smith approached the student.

Outen-Fleming allegedly grabbed Schmidt's phone before punching his victim and going through his pockets, District Attorney Larry Krasner said.

Surveillance footage from the South Philadelphia street captured the two masked goons pushing Schmidt off the road and knocking him to the ground before walking away. Outen-Fleming allegedly chucked the device down a street.

The two teens split up as Schmidt continued to follow Smith, who allegedly pulled out a gun from his back pocket and allegedly fired the fatal shot.

Nicholas McEntyre



Reuters

HORRIFIC: A mother touches the head of her son, who was killed in Kyiv during a Russian missile and drone strike targeting residential areas like the one below on Thursday.

UKRAINE HORROR

Pics of Russian slaughter

Reuters; AP

By CHRIS NESI

A gut-wrenching picture shows a Ukrainian mom crouched over the lifeless body of her young son, gently stroking his head, after Russia unleashed one of its most fearsome strikes yet on Kyiv overnight Wednesday.

The 11-hour drone and missile assault targeted residential buildings and infrastructure in the Ukrainian capital, killing at least 25 people in what Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha grimly described as a "night of horror."

Children were among the "significant number" of casualties, Tymur Tkachenko, the head of Kyiv's military administration, said.

"The enemy is once again deliberately targeting residential areas and killing civilians," he railed early Thursday, according to the BBC.

Harrowing photos laid bare the unimaginable horrors left in the wake of the relentless bombardment.

One of the most haunting scenes shows a grieving mother with her hand placed lovingly on her dead son's head after he was slaughtered in the strikes.

The boy's body, draped in a white sheet soaked with blood, lies lifeless on the floor of a bombed-out home atop a pile of bloody rags.

Other graphic images taken in the immediate aftermath of the brutal attack show emergency crews carrying gravely wounded children to safety.

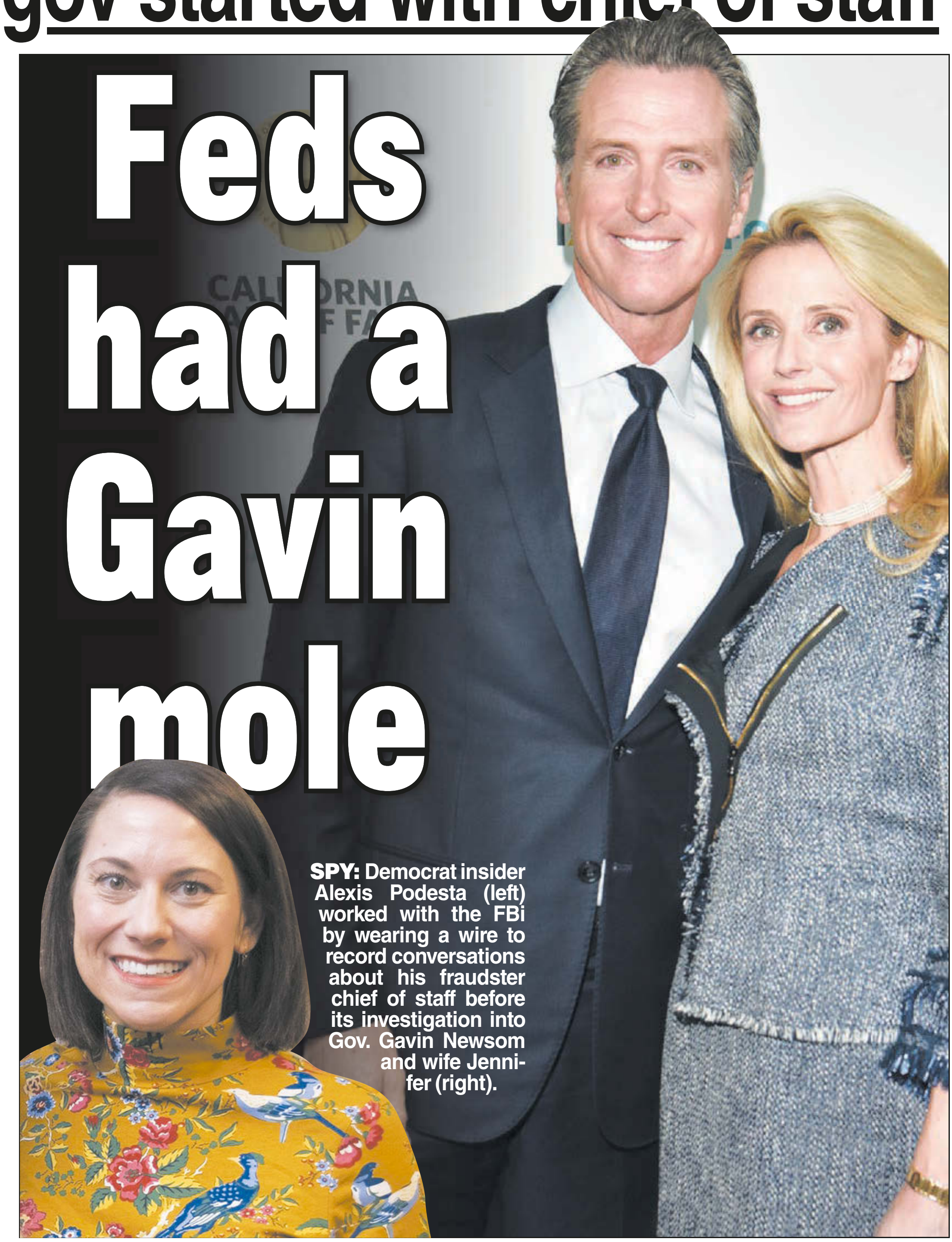
One picture shows a young man's singed legs and bloodied torso as police hoist him down the concrete steps of his apartment building, which is littered with debris and shattered glass.

In another disturbing scene, a young victim, feet smeared with mud and deep-red blood, clasps his arms around his chest as a fire crew hauls him out of harm's way in a makeshift cloth gurney.

Probe of gov started with chief of staff

Feds had a Gavin mole

By JOSH KOEHN



SPY: Democrat insider Alexis Podesta (left) worked with the FBi by wearing a wire to record conversations about his fraudster chief of staff before its investigation into Gov. Gavin Newsom and wife Jennifer (right).

Getty Images

The FBI had a mole inside Gov. Gavin Newsom's political orbit before the agency's corruption probe expanded into the governor and his wife, The Post has learned.

Democrat insider Alexis Podesta, 45, secretly recorded conversations during the criminal probe into Newsom's then-chief of staff, Dana Williamson, 53, who pleaded guilty to federal fraud and tax charges in May, according to Williamson's attorney.

The revelation she was wearing a wire as far back as June 2024 explains why a swath of Sacramento political insiders and lobbyists were stunned to receive FBI letters last fall informing them that their phone calls had been intercepted during the investigation — despite many having little or no connection to Williamson.

"Alexis wore a wire, and Dana did not," said McGregor Scott, Williamson's lawyer and a former US attorney for the Eastern District of California, which is now investigating the Newsoms.

The disclosure comes as Newsom announced last month that he and his wife — whose nonprofit has been burning through money in recent years — as well as members of the governor's inner circle are under federal investigation.

Within hours of that announcement, Newsom blasted out an email to raise money for a political action committee.

Received letter

Assemblymember Josh Hoover (R-Folsom) told The Post he was among those who received one of the letters, even though he had never spoken with either Williamson or Podesta.

"A lot of people received letters essentially informing us that there were certain periods of time where the FBI was given access to follow phone calls," Hoover said.

"I don't know how these investigations work, but it sounds like they cast a pretty broad net across the capital community to see what they could find."

A separate source with knowledge of the matter said they knew of four Sacramento insiders who also received FBI notifications confirming they had been recorded.

One recipient told the source: "Dude, I got this f---ing letter. I never even met with Dana Williamson!"

"Their curiosity was that they never even met with Dana Williamson, so they were wondering what this is all about," the source said.

"And now you have the answer."

The governor publicly accused President Trump of directing the Justice Department to investigate him as political retaliation ahead of a possible 2028 presidential campaign.

But sources familiar with the matter told The Post that federal investigators have spent the past year digging into not only Newsom, but also his staff and his wife's taxes, leading Jennifer Siebel Newsom to accuse Trump of having "no boundaries."

Whistleblowers reportedly tipped off the feds to launch the probe into Newsom, and Williamson's attorney told The Post that his client declined to cooperate because she had no information on Newsom.

Political posts

Podesta, a longtime Democratic power broker, remains on California's State Compensation Insurance Fund board — where she receives annual compensation of nearly $61,000 — after Newsom appointed her in January 2020.

She previously served as secretary of the California Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency and held senior positions in former Gov. Jerry Brown's administration.

She also worked for PG&E, Disney and the late Sen. Dianne Feinstein.

Podesta has not been charged with a crime, but her attorney, Bill Portanova, has identified her as the uncharged co-conspirator described in the Williamson indictment and confirmed she has cooperated with federal investigators.

The governor's office declined The Post's request for comment on the circumstances involving Podesta, saying it is a personnel matter.

Podesta and her attorney did not respond to requests for comment.

Williamson pleaded guilty in May to conspiracy to commit bank and wire fraud, filing a false tax return and making false statements to the FBI.

'Ky. devil shot' in church

A mock firing squad dubbed "Commandos for Christ" stormed into a Kentucky Baptist church's vacation Bible school — and executed the devil as part of a bewildering skit in front of young children.

The bizarre scenes, which unfolded at Lexington's Mount Olivet Baptist Church, saw armed soldiers take out their enemy and pastor Dewayne Walker rallying kids to chant "take him out, blow him up," a TikTok video shared on Reddit on Monday shows.

So-called Commandos for Christ surrounded their satanic target — who was flailing on the ground — before they opened fire in front of the screaming audience.

As the noise of gunshots rang out in the room, the "Devil" was shot and dragged out via a side door.

The bewildering scenes sparked fury — and Lexington cops said they received several calls, tips and concerns over the clip.

Retired teacher Kathi Crowe — of the Moms Demand Action anti-gun violence campaign group — told WAVE the clip was "unbelievably disturbing." She said churches should be safe spaces for children and branded the simulation "an appalling abuse."

Meanwhile, Walker said in a Facebook video he was "befuddled" by the outrage. "The misinformation out there is sad," he said.

Chris Bradford

Scooter fiend punches kid

Police are searching for a wacko on a scooter who randomly pushed a boy to the ground and punched him in the face while the kid was with his mom in Queens, according to authorities and sources.

The 12-year-old boy was walking with his mother near Blossom Avenue and Main Street in Flushing around 9 p.m. on June 18 when the random attack unfolded, according to the NYPD and law enforcement sources.

A man on an electric scooter rode up to the pair, then grabbed the boy, pushed him to the ground and slugged him, cops and sources said.

The suspect fled the scene after the assault, sources added.

Cops released a photo of the suspect, who was carrying a jug of orange juice while wearing a blue shirt, khaki shorts and white sneakers.

Zoe Hussain

REP. SUOZZI
"Be patriotic!"

Suozzi's plea to Dems

Democrats have a public relations crisis on their hands that they need to change now — the perception that they're unpatriotic, Rep. Tom Suozzi declares in a new op-ed.

"I love America. Unfortunately, as we celebrate our nation's 250th birthday, too many Americans associate those three words only with Republicans," Suozzi (D-LI) wrote in a Wall Street Journal opinion piece Wednesday.

"Democrats need to change that," he argued.

Suozzi voiced several grievances he and fell Dems have with President Trump and the "nation's current trajectory" but urged those frustrated with the country's direction not to let it dampen their patriotism.

Some recent surveys show that Democrats are less patriotic than Republicans.

Just 18% of Democrats said they felt "proud" to be an American compared to 68% of Republicans, according to an Elon University poll. *Carl Campanile*

Buying it up to bulldoze

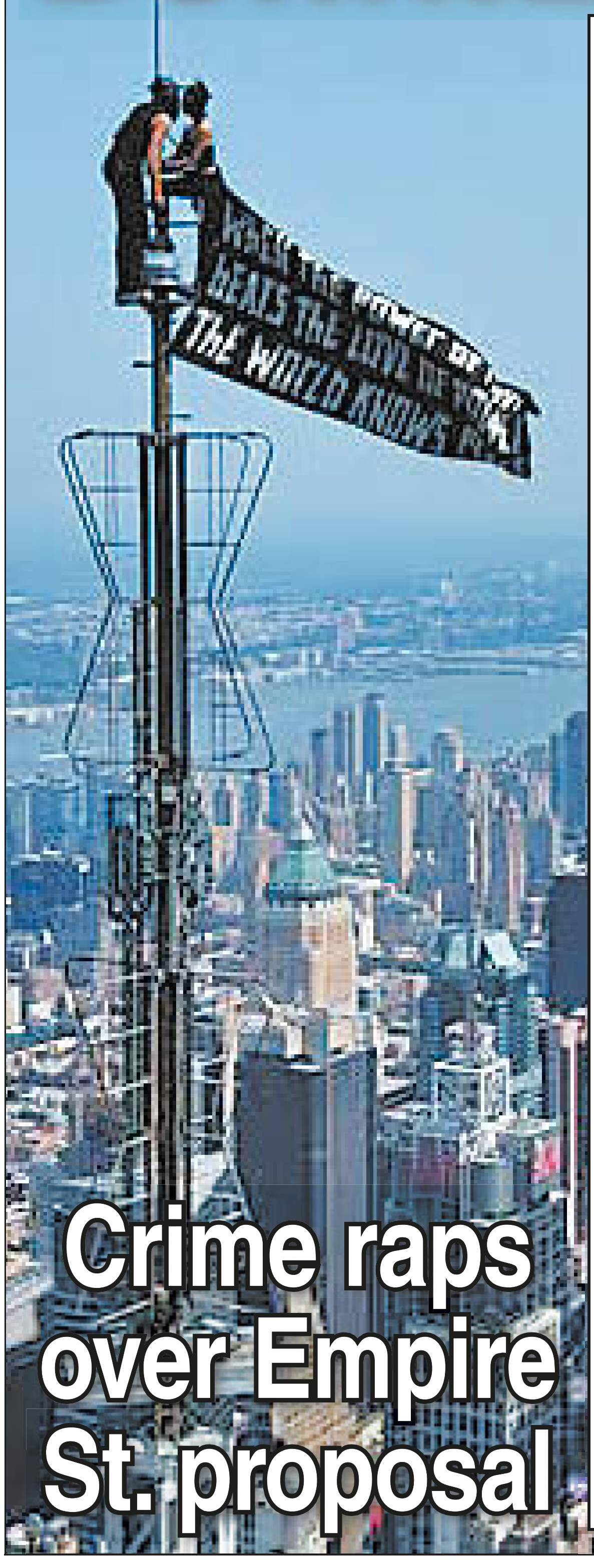
Leave it to the ultra-wealthy to secretly drop $125 million on a building just to demolish it.

Citadel hedge-fund billionaire Ken Griffin spent three years using a web of anonymous LLCs to quietly buy up all 138 units, plus the ground-floor retail space, of the Solaris condominium in Miami, Bloomberg reported.

The 22-story tower was one of the final roadblocks in Griffin's quest to build a multibillion-dollar corporate campus.

Lauren Elkies Schram

BONNIE AND CLIMB



Crime raps over Empire St. proposal

Instagram/@angela_nikolau

By KEVIN SHEEHAN,
JOE MARINO
and MATT TROUTMAN

Reuters

HIGH THERE: Angela Nikolau and Ivan Kuznetsov smooch outside court Thursday, a day after he proposed atop the Empire State Building's antenna (left).

They came down from a dizzying height.

The dingbat daredevils who got engaged atop the Empire State Building's antenna were sprung Thursday after getting hit with a slew of charges for the cringe Instagram stunt.

A black catsuit-clad Angela Nikolau, 33, and her beau Ivan Kuznetsov, 32, beamed with clasped hands as they walked free from their arraignment in Manhattan Criminal Court a day after he dropped on one knee more than 1,000 feet in the air.

"It's the most powerful power: love," Kuznetsov intoned in a thick Russian accent, shortly before playing serious tonsil hockey with Nikolau on the Chambers Street subway station's steps.

"We believe in love."

Nikolau didn't wear the engagement ring that she flaunted on Instagram moments before NYPD cops arrested the perpetually posting pair Wednesday. The ring remained in a police station, Kuznetsov said.

'Trespassing'

The exhibitionist lovebirds' shameless smooching contrasted with their clear nervousness in court, where they were arraigned on charges that could send them to prison for up to seven years if convicted.

The alleged trespass break-in caused $2,000 worth of damage, prosecutors contended.

The duo are believed to have bought tickets at the Empire State Building Tuesday at around 9 p.m., before hiding at the Midtown landmark overnight, law-enforcement sources said.

Video showed them emerging from a hatch on the 102nd floor at roughly 5 a.m. the next day, the sources said.

Kuznetsov then used tools to loosen brackets for metal cables stretching across a stairwell, which they then allegedly entered, according to the sources.

They then scrambled up the building's 1,454-foot-high antenna and unfurled a banner reading: "When the power of love beats the love of power the world knows peace."

After climbing down to a platform, Kuznetsov — who goes by Ivan "Vanya" Beerkus on social media — dropped to one knee and proposed to Nikolau as she still wore a black cat mask. The two were hit with charges of burglary, reckless endangerment and criminal mischief, all felonies, in addition to misdemeanor counts of possession of burglary tools, trespass and criminal tampering.

'Love' defense

Their defense attorney, Jason Krinsky, argued prosecutors overcharged.

"Even the building's own people, the Empire State's own people, said there was no risk to tenants, guests on the observation deck or anyone in the building," the lawyer claimed.

"It was a message of love," he said. "She didn't say 'no.' So you gotta give him that."

Nikolau and Kuznetsov originally hail from Moscow and now reside in East Orange, NJ.

kevin.sheehan@nypost.com

Blab-Guardia buzz

An NYPD helicopter pilot and a LaGuardia air traffic controller's radio chatter about the attention-seeking couple who scaled the Empire State Building Wednesday has gone viral as a quintessentially New York City exchange.

"Yeah what's all the hoopla going on over there?" the air traffic controller asked the pilot as the death-defying stunt got underway.

"Two geniuses climbed the Empire State Building to the top of the spire," the NYPD pilot responded with mild contempt.

"Oh that's awesome," the air traffic controller responded.

"It's not some worker changing a light, is it?" he asked.

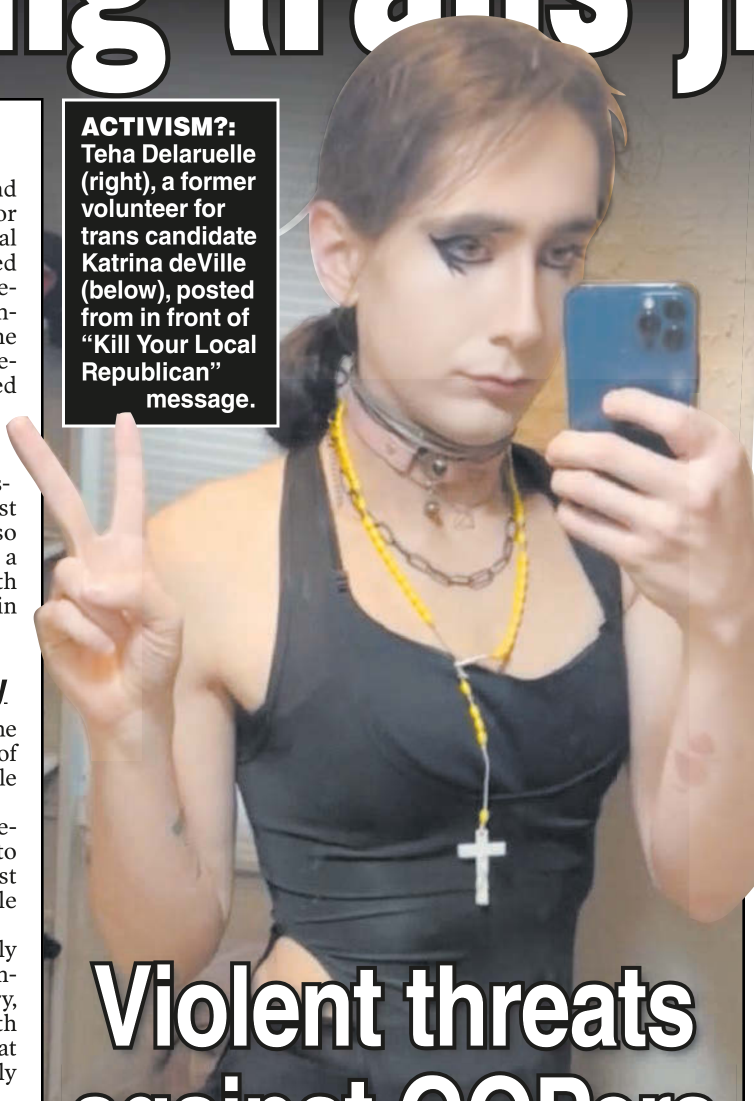
"No, it's a male and female dressed in black, they had some flag they were waving when they were up at the top and he just proposed to her," the clearly unimpressed officer replied.

Angelina Nikolau, 33 and her beau Ivan Kuznetsov, 32, were both arrested after climbing the tower to unfurl a banner at the top of the 1,454-foot landmark.

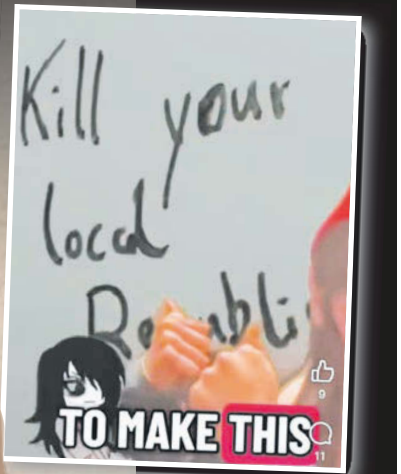
Kuznetsov then dropped to one knee on a platform beneath the skyscraper's spire and popped the question to Nikolau before descending into the arms of the NYPD. *Chris Nesi*

‘Doing trans jihad’

Violent threats against GOPers



ACTIVISM?: Teha Delaruelle (right), a former volunteer for trans candidate Katrina deVille (below), posted from in front of “Kill Your Local Republican” message.



Instagram/tehabbygal_ (2); Getty Images for WisDems

By CHRIS NESI

A transgender activist and former campaign volunteer for a Democratic congressional candidate in Wisconsin called for deadly violence against Republicans — and vowed to unleash “trans jihad” against the “animals” in the MAGA movement in a series of unhinged videos on social media.

In one such posting, Teha Delaruelle, who briefly volunteered on the campaign of Wisconsin Democratic Socialist Katrina deVille, who is also transgender, sits in front of a dry-erase board scrawled with “kill your local Republican” in black marker.

Eyes on Wis. primary

“We’re going to make this the moderate position for the state of Wisconsin,” Delaruelle says while pointing at the sick message.

“But I need your help, because we have one month do to this, so let’s do it,” the activist says, flashing a double thumbs-up.

The time frame is presumably a reference to deVille’s upcoming Aug. 11 Democratic primary, in which deVille is vying with two other Democrats to unseat GOP incumbent and Trump ally Rep. Tony Wied.

In another twisted video, Delaruelle, a biological male who identifies as female, declared, “Just a reminder, we are doing trans jihad,” with a superimposed trans flag in the foreground featuring an outstretched arm holding a rifle with what looks like Arabic writing above it.

“It’s about making the oppressor, the bigots, the animals that make up MAGA, for example, right? So for decades, everyone else, all the marginalized, minorities, we’ve had to be the ones that walk down the streets with anxiety, with fear, but no, no more, no, no, no, no, no, no more, folks,” Delaruelle states disjointedly in the recording.

“We’re gonna do the reverse. We’re gonna make it so that they will be the ones that have to walk down the streets in fear, anxiety and worry. And we’re not gonna make this like, oh, they gotta do this for like, a week or something, where they get really scared. No, this is their new reality. And it’s never gonna change,” the crazed activist pledges before ponderously holding up two fingers and saying “peace.”

Claim of ‘genocide’

In an equally deranged Substack post from earlier this month, Delaruelle bemoans what he calls an ongoing “genocide” against “trans and queer folk,” and says the only way to meet the threat is to wage war.

DeVille denounced the former volunteer’s calls for violence against Republicans.

“I want to be clear that I do not accept or condone violence or threats toward anyone and do not encourage violence, hate, or threats of any kind,” deVille said.

“The threats she has posed have also made my life more dangerous, and I understand first hand how awful this is, how awful it feels and how absolutely unacceptable any of this is.”

8 monks killed by Thai kid in truck

Horrifying video captured the moment monks on a pilgrimage walk were mowed down Thursday by an 11-year-old driving his dad’s pickup truck, killing eight of them.

Security footage shows about 35 monks walking in a single file along a roadway in Mukdahan in Thailand, initially with just a lone motorcycle passing on the quiet road.

Suddenly, an out-of-control truck barreled through the procession, launching the Buddhist holy men onto the hood before catapulting them through the air.

Surviving monks rushed toward the crash site, where five were dead at the scene and another three died later at a local hospital, according to Mukdahan Governor Worrayan Boonnarat.

Other footage showed robed bodies scattered across the roadway and the wrecked pickup truck nearby, its front end smashed in, hood ripped back and crumpled and windshield completely gone.

The deadly Thursday morning crash also left 14 hospitalized, including four in critical condition.

The religious group had just set off on a 161-mile trek to Ubon Ratchathani about 30 minutes before they were mowed down.

Monks told police they saw the vehicle swerving before it veered off the road and slammed into them.

The boy has since been taken into custody, where he will be questioned by child protection officers.

Anna Young with *Wires*

2 frat bros die in house fire

Two University of Alabama fraternity brothers were killed in a house fire while on a hunting trip with two friends who managed to escape, according to officials.

Mark “McNeil” Mostellar, 21, and James “Walter” Hensley II, 19, were killed in Evergreen, Ala., around 1:30 a.m. Wednesday, the Conecuh County Coroner’s Office said, without revealing how the blaze appears to have started.

The standout athletes — who were part of the Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity, the oldest fraternity in the state — were pronounced dead at the scene.

The two friends who managed to escape were hospitalized with injuries.

Mostellar, who played as an outside linebacker for Mobile’s UMS-Wright Preparatory School, had a bright future, according to his former coach, Terry Curtis.

Business major student Hensley, a university freshman who was part of the Greek Basketball Association, was killed just one year after graduating St. Paul’s high school.

Chris Bradford

Warden had inmate sex

A female prison warden has been locked up for having sex with a convicted murderer — who listed her as his “partner” in his contacts on a smuggled phone.

Rebecca Green, 29, started her fling with John Otugade in October 2022 at the maximum-security HMP Whitemoor in Cambridgeshire, England, Cambridge Constabulary said Tuesday.

The warden initially denied the illicit fling with Otugade, who was sentenced in 2012 to serve at least 25 years for murdering a London nightclub bouncer.

Green pleaded guilty to wilful misconduct in public office and was sentenced to 16 months in prison last Wednesday. *Chris Bradford*

Always heave Paris

Lily Collins and Ashley Park film a scene on location for "Emily in Paris." The off-screen friendship got messy onscreen over a croissant fight. "In order to aim it properly, you have to really chuck it hard," Park said of the duel.

AbacaPress / SplashNews.com

A LESS GRIM REAPER

US death rates fall

By ANTHONY BLAIR

Tens of thousands of Americans dodged death last year, new data shows.

The US death rate has fallen to the lowest point on record ahead of America 250, as fatal overdoses and COVID fatalities continued to plunge.

The death rate fell 4.6% last year to 689.2 deaths per 100,000, according to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Deaths surged to 879.7 per 100,000 people in 2021 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Overdose deaths peaked a year later in 2022, and then started falling.

But last year, death declined across nearly every demographic and every age group, according to the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics.

The main driver of the record low death rate was the continued fall in fatal drug overdoses and COVID deaths, according to report co-author Farida Ahmad.

Black Americans continue to have the highest death rate of any tracked group, while men still die at higher rates than women, as has been the case for many years.

There were some surprising features of the new data, including a rise in deaths from influenza and pneumonia, which moved from the 11th leading cause of death to the eighth.

In 2025, 56,500 people died of influenza and pneumonia, up from 48,100 in 2024.

Last year also marked the first time the influenza category had appeared in the top 10 causes of death since 2020.

But flu deaths rise

The rising influenza deaths were blamed on more dangerous flu strains and declining vaccination rates.

"Some seasons are better, with lower attack rates and lower morbidity, and other seasons, just by nature of the changes in the viruses, are worse, with more hospitalizations and more deaths," Geeta Sood, associate professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, told the Wall Street Journal.

"We're seeing nationally less trust for vaccines than we did in the past, and that's what most of us in epidemiology and public health think is the predominant reason for lack of vaccination," she said.

The 2024-25 flu season was one of the most severe in years, with an estimated 51 million cases and 710,000 hospitalizations, according to the CDC.

Corpse found wedged in sofa

A man's rotting corpse was discovered wedged inside a couch by a cleaning crew at a Brooklyn home for the mentally ill, according to authorities and sources.

The cleaning service arrived at the building on Union Street and Utica Avenue in Crown Heights around 8:50 a.m. Thursday — only for a resident to call the cops on them after mistaking them for burglars, the NYPD and sources said.

Police left after realizing the mistake, but returned to the building 30 minutes later after the cleaners made a grim discovery, sources said.

The crew shockingly stumbled upon the skeletal remains of a heavily decomposed man's body wedged in a sofa, sources added.

The building houses mentally-ill and disabled residents, sources said.

It's not yet known if the man was a victim of a crime, as the Medical Examiner's office is working to determine his cause of death. *Joe Marino, Amanda Woods and Zoe Hussain*

HOT TO TROTSKY

Radicals are 'red'y for more

RAGING: Anti-Israel former Rep. Cori Bush, who is seeking to retake her House seat in Missouri, is part of a growing wave of socialist Democrats embolden by recent successes.

AP

Socialists targeting many races

By RYAN KING

WASHINGTON — They're not done making their marx on the Democratic Party.

Fresh off a recent string of key upset victories, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) is eyeing more potential breakthrough wins in Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, and possibly Florida over the next few weeks as it works to drag Democrats further to the left.

Thus far, the DSA has touted four victories in House races — Melat Kiros in Colorado, Chris Rabb in Pennsylvania, Darializa Avila Chevalier in New York, and Claire Valdez in New York. Additionally, they backed incumbent Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY).

"We are so cooked," one House Democratic staffer bluntly told The Post about the trend. "[Hakeem] Jeffries will have to start calling members 'comrade' during caucus meetings come January."

There are at least nine more House races on the DSA's target list.

Perhaps the most closely watched upcoming race is in Missouri, where former Rep. Cori Bush (D-Mo.) is seeking a comeback after her stinging 2024 loss to Rep. Wesley Bell (D-Mo.).

Broad attack

Two years ago, she faced fierce blowback over her anti-Israel stance, but now the politics of that issue has seemingly shifted within the Democratic Party. Sparse polling has shown them neck and neck in the race.

Bush has been backed by lefty bigwigs such as Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) The race will be a test of how much the politics around Israel have really changed within the Democratic Party.

Also in Missouri, the DSA is hoping Hartzell Gray will get the Dem nod to take on Rep. Mark Alford (R-Mo.) in a race where Republicans are widely favored.

The Missouri primary will take place Aug. 4, the same day as other contests in Michigan, where the DSA is backing "Squad" Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.), Donavan McKinney, and Kyle Blomquist.

McKinney, a Michigan state rep, is hoping to take down Shri Thanedar (D-Mich.), whom he's ripped as "Detroit's own Elon Musk" in the state's 13th Congressional District. Last year, Thanedar pushed to impeach President Trump as he grappled with primary challenges.

Similar to Colorado's Denver-based race, where Kiros beat longtime incumbent Rep. Diana DeGette (D-Col.), Thanedar is in a very deep blue district.

Meanwhile, Blomquist is vying to win the Democratic primary to take on Rep. Jack Bergman (R-Mich.), whose seat the Cook Political Report rates as solid Republican. The vast district includes the Upper Peninsula and northern Michigan.

On Aug. 11, the DSA is hoping Katrina DeVille will get the Dem nod to take on Rep. Tony Wied (R-Wis.), and Emily Berge will get the nomination to challenge Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-Wis.) Only Van Orden's seat is competitive in November.

After that, the DSA is rooting for Oliver Larkin to defeat Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) on Aug. 18; and Heath Howard could nab the seat being vacated by Rep. Chris Pappas (D-NH).

Republicans have long sought to pick up that New Hampshire 1st Congressional District seat. If the DSA prevails there, it could be a significant test of the far-left's appeal in competitive general election races.

Democrat's two-faced med Mich. mash

Democratic Senate candidate Dr. Abdul El-Sayed has a history of promoting questionable health products on his podcast while accusing other health gurus of hawking similar gimmicks.

El-Sayed — who polls show leading Michigan's primary race ahead of state Sen. Mallory McMorrow and Rep. Haley Stevens — made a stink about Dr. Mehmet Oz during the latter's Senate run in 2022, accusing him of trying to "sell people s--t they didn't need."

"He hasn't been telling it like it is, he's been telling it like some companies pay him to tell it like it is," El-Sayed vented about Oz on the "Bad Faith" podcast in 2021.

"He is, in fact, part of the same kind of medical industrial complex that exists to sell you things that you don't need that are not actually based in any level of science," he added.

Around that same time, El-Sayed — a trained epidemiologist — hosted a podcast titled "America Dissected," which featured ads from at least 35 sponsors across 316 episodes.

In March 2022, months after dissing Oz, El-Sayed was called out on social media for promoting Magic Spoon Cereal, a brand that advertises heavily on social media and podcasts.

"I broadly reject any advertisements that are for products making claims about health," El-Sayed replied in a since-deleted post on X. "Magic spoon [sic] is simply a high-protein, low-carb cereal. They're not claiming to improve your sleep or add years to your life."

Ryan King

DENISE POWELL
"Read some fairy smut."

Neb. Dem solution to Trump: fairies

A Nebraska candidate whom Democrats are entrusting to help win back the House resorts to a kinky habit when having to deal with President Trump.

Denise Powell, who won her state's Second District Dem primary on May 13, urged supporters of her Women Who Run Nebraska PAC to "read some fairy smut" to cope with Trump's 2024 victory over Vice President Kamala Harris.

"Today, do a little something that brings you joy," Powell said in an Instagram video post on Inauguration Day 2025. "Stop watching the news. Stop following social media. Eat a little comfort food. Go out with a friend. Watch some junk TV."

"Read some fairy smut — I'm super into that right now — but just remember that we're in it for the long haul, and today is just the start of something that's going to be one hell of a ride, but we've survived it before," she added. "We'll do it again, and we're just gonna keep showing up."

Fairy smut is a sub-genre of "Romantasy" (romance and fantasy) where "faeries" are muscular, mythical men who have magic and powers.

The fairies tend to live in a magical city with castles and gardens while falling in love with a human girl — and having lots of sexual encounters and before becoming a fairy, too.

Josh Christenson and Andrea Palladino

Walking a gain for brain

Move over, Batman.

A new group of "superhumans" has emerged — and they're all 80-plus.

A study published in Neurology has identified a rare group of older adults called "super movers" who appear to have a remarkable advantage: a significantly lower risk of cognitive decline, even when their brains show the same Alzheimer's-related changes seen in other people their age.

Researchers describe the group as having a "novel exceptional aging phenotype," which is a biological profile that may reveal important clues about how some people maintain brain health despite effects of aging.

The ability is surprisingly simple: walking speed.

Only about 6 to 10% of adults qualify as super movers. These people walk faster than average for their age and sex, typically at a speed of someone about 30 years younger.

Previous research has found they tend to have fewer chronic medical conditions, healthier lifestyles, less depression and a younger biological age compared with their peers.

But the latest study went further, examining whether physical advantage translated into stronger cognitive health. *Patrice Peck*

Shot dead in Coney

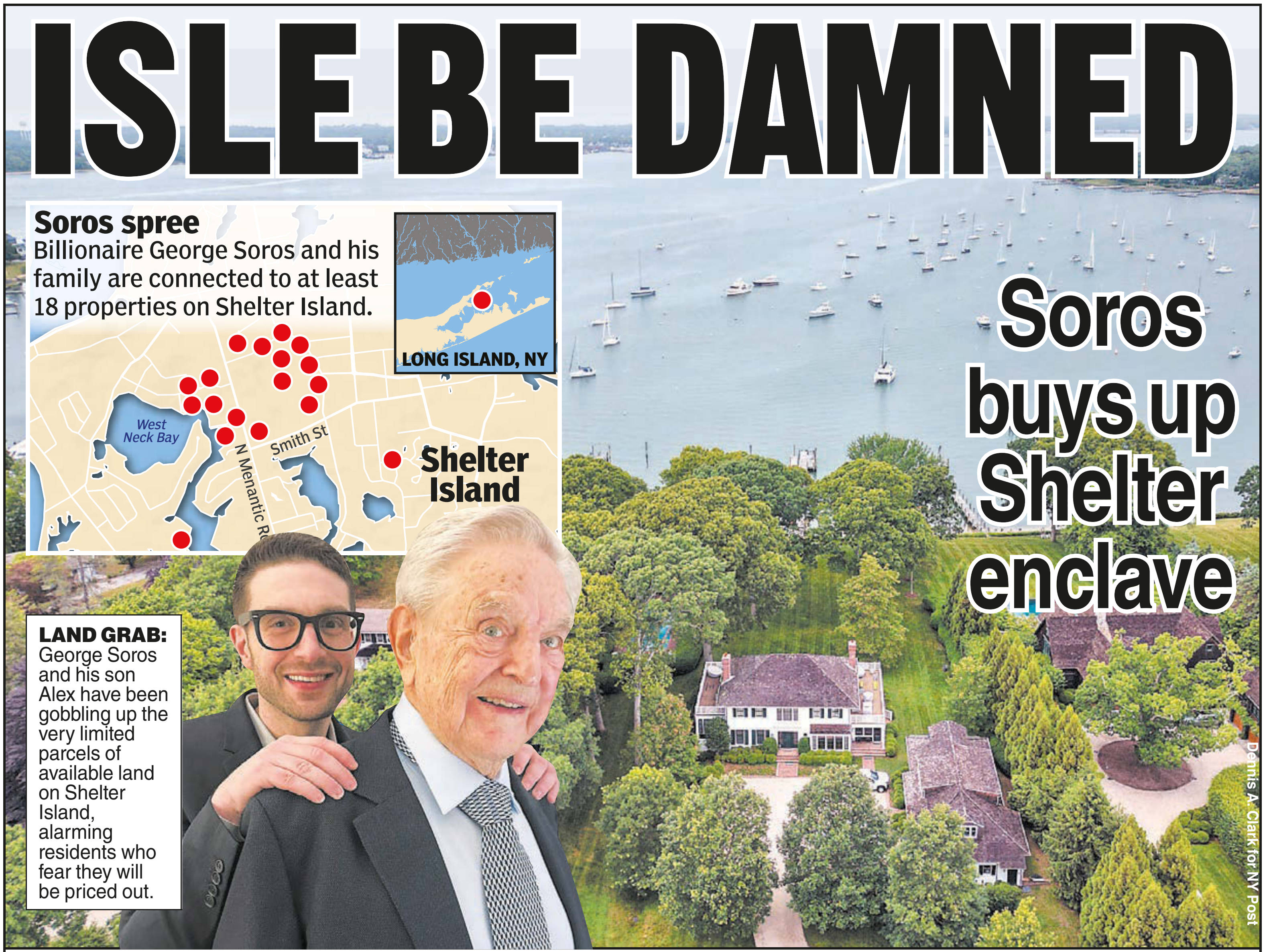
A drill rapper and father of a 3-year-old girl was shot dead in broad daylight, steps from the Coney Island boardwalk this week, according to cops and reports.

Truron Roach-Martin, 24 — whose stage name is "Briscoe Bands" — was shot in the face and chest around 9:20 a.m. Wednesday, about a block from the ramps leading to the iconic Brooklyn boardwalk, authorities said.

Roach's mother, Christine, told the Daily News her son "was loved" and left behind a 3-year-old daughter.

The alleged killer fled east on West 28th Street toward Mermaid Avenue, they said. *Amanda Woods*

ISLE BE DAMNED



Soros spree
Billionaire George Soros and his family are connected to at least 18 properties on Shelter Island.

Soros buys up Shelter enclave

LAND GRAB: George Soros and his son Alex have been gobbling up the very limited parcels of available land on Shelter Island, alarming residents who fear they will be priced out.

Dennis A. Clark for NY Post

By ISABEL VINCENT

SHELTER ISLAND, NY — George Soros and his family have been on a property buying spree, scooping up homes and prime parcels of land in an idyllic Hamptons enclave, angering local residents who worry the billionaire land grab is already upending the tight-knit community, The Post has learned.

The family now controls nearly 120 acres of property on Shelter Island, which is only accessible by ferry, making the Soroses — billionaire Hungarian-American investor George, 95, and his sons Alex, 40, and Gregory, 38 — the largest private landowner in the community.

The 18 properties they have bought were purchased through myriad shell companies, according to public records reviewed by The Post.

"We never really figured out what their purpose in buying so much land could be," said a former resident who sold their property to the family a few years ago.

"But because you can only get here by ferry, we thought they might be building a bunker, away from everyone."

Six years ago, when Gregory scooped up a 22-acre property on one quiet street, it suddenly saw a steady flow of construction workers and water tankers arriving a few times a week to fill his pool, rumored to be the largest on the 6.5-mile island, the former resident said.

Tight security

Cameras have been installed on the street, and local plumbers, carpenters and housekeepers were required to sign nondisclosure agreements in order to work at the property, according to the former resident, who asked not to be identified.

The family bought up all the properties on the road and petitioned the Shelter Island Town Board to install a security fence on the road to keep locals out. The town blocked those plans because there is a town-owned landing at the end of the road, but residents told The Post they believe it is just a matter of time before the Soros family gets its way.

"We can't keep up with the lawyers that these millionaires have, and they seem to build whatever they want," said Steve Lenox, a longtime local resident who voiced his concerns at a Shelter Island Town Board meeting on June 29. "That's what's ruining the island."

In addition to the Soros family, real estate developer Stefan Sovoliev recently purchased some of the key businesses on the island, including the historic Chequit Hotel and the Shelter Island Heights Pharmacy, then angered locals by promptly shutting down its prescription service — the only one on the island.

"I've seen Montauk turn on a dime, I've seen Sag Harbor turn on a dime," longtime resident Mike Gaynor told this week's Shelter Island Town Board meeting, referring to Hamptons enclaves that have become unaffordable for locals once the ultra-rich moved in and began buying up properties. "And in a short period of time, no one is going to afford to live here anymore."

Started with $6M

Shelter Island is approximately 8,000 acres in total. However, a quarter of the land on the island comprises a 2,064-acre Nature Conservancy.

With 120 acres, the Soroses control 2% of the available land. The next largest private landowner is Westmoreland Farm, which owns 65.4 acres, public records show.

The family began accumulating property after Susan Weber, Soros' second wife, whom he divorced in 2005, bought her sprawling five-bedroom waterfront property in the island's exclusive Dering Harbor neighborhood in 2013 for nearly $6 million.

The home was the site of a lavish wedding rehearsal dinner for Alex Soros' marriage to former Hilary Clinton aide Huma Abedin last year.

"They crippled the island with their son's wedding to Huma," said a longtime island resident who lives nearby. "Roads blocked off, helicopters flying the Clintons in. Absurd security and disruption here."

The actual wedding took place a short distance away in Watermill, another Hamptons enclave where Alex Soros owns a home.

Alex Soros took over his father's $25 billion Open Society Foundations empire in 2023.

The family has donated tens of millions to radical progressive political candidates and recently funneled $102 million through their Democracy Political Action Committee, the super PAC Soros launched in 2020, for progressives running in midterm elections.

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Spidey cents on the dollar

STAN Lee says he made just $6 million in a deal with Disney because he got bad legal advice — when he should have become "indescribably" rich in the deal.

In an unreleased documentary, "Stan Lee: The Final Chapter," the late Marvel writer opens up about the paltry sum while admitting, "Nobody has made more bad business decisions than I have."

"Disney wanted to buy Marvel and they offered me a contract giving me 10% of Marvel's profits, so, I said, 'Man that's wonderful,'" he says in a clip from the doc obtained exclusively by Page Six.

Lee was responsible for creating comic characters such as Spider-Man, Black Panther and the Incredible Hulk, the core of the four stunningly successful "Avengers" movies, which have spawned more than a dozen spin-offs.

He says in the documentary that a lawyer convinced him to sell for an upfront lump sum rather than a share of profits.

He said he sold for $6 million.

It's not entirely clear what the terms of the deal were or what Lee was selling.

He was an employee of Marvel, so he never owned rights to his comic book creations. The rights to Marvel's intellectual property have been bought and sold several times since, most recently when Disney acquired 100% of the rights in 2009 for $4 billion.

Lee opened up about the deal about a month before his death in 2018 at 95.

"If I had waited for this contract to come through, I would've been part owner of Disney. I would've been indescribably wealthy," he said.

The doc will premiere at San Diego Comic-Con later this month.

A spokesperson for Disney did not give a comment to Page Six.

Hush stops here

MICHAEL Cohen is the newest colorful political character to join WABC Radio, we hear. The network has been home to hosts **Rudy Giuliani**, **Curtis Sliwa**, **Anthony Weiner** and more over the years. And now **John Catsimatidis**' network is welcoming **Donald Trump**'s former fixer, who became a household name when it was revealed that he made hush money payments to porn star **Stormy Daniels** during Trump's 2016 election campaign. Cats is kicking off Cohen's new gig by sitting down with him Sunday to grill the lawyer on issues from Gaza to Iran and New York City. Cohen's show, "When You Know . . . You Know," debuts July 12 on the AM talk radio station.

Walk down the isle

INVITE to **Taylor Swift**'s wedding lost in the mail? Hamptons hot spot 75 Main is hosting a party today where Swifties can celebrate the wedding with Swift's music, special cocktails, staff wearing pink T-shirts saying "Swifty wedding party" and so on — they're even cutting a cake, we're told. Owner **Zach Erdem** (above) told us, "We wanted to create a magical night where people can sing, dance and enjoy the excitement together." The actual wedding is expected to happen today at Madison Square Garden.

Mattpapz / BACKGRID

Fawning all over! Jennifer Garner goes chestnuts for a monochrome look while promoting her show "The Five-Star Weekend" in London.

Clique on the TV

ASHLEY Tisdale is creating a show based on her blockbuster controversial essay about the "toxic mom group" she was a part of. The Netflix series, titled "Toxic Moms," follows a new mom who gets involved with a clique of cool, wealthy mothers, reports Deadline. Soon the group of women reveal their darker side, making the mother ask herself: In the isolation of motherhood, how far would you go to taste community? The "High School Musical" star, 41, is developing the half-hour comedy with **Sabrina Jalees** and **Ali Wong**. We exclusively reported the project was initially being shopped as a movie. Reps for Netflix didn't get back to us. Tisdale shocked the Internet when she kicked off 2026 by blasting her former group of mom friends — which sleuths revealed included **Mandy Moore**, **Hilary Duff** and **Meghan Trainor** — in an essay for the Cut. She claims she was excluded by the other moms so much she felt she was "not being cool enough." When she decided to leave the clique, she says she texted them: "This is too high school for me and I don't want to take part in it anymore." One source told Page Six Tisdale was "insufferable," and said the friend breakup had "been a long time coming."

Revenge Material

MADONNA appears to take jabs at her ex-husband **Sean Penn** on her new "Confessions II" album. In "Bizarre," about a movie star threatened by his lover's fame, the Material Girl (above) croons of a Hollywood hotshot with "deep blue eyes" being the "perfect prize." "He drove way too fast / Shelby Cobra, wasn't meant to last," she sings, name-dropping the sports car she was rumored to have gifted Penn when they wed in 1985. "Roll out the carpet for us but you won't share it," sings Madonna, 67. "The little things that you did that made me want you / The fire was so intense . . . A thousand reasons why you could never have me / The thought of being with you is so indecent." Reps for the former couple, who divorced in 1989, couldn't be reached.

Single lady summer kickoff

WHO needs a man when you have a best friend? We hear **Jenny Mollen**, who recently split from her husband, "American Pie" star **Jason Biggs**, is spending the summer in the Hamptons at her longtime bestie **Stacey Bendet**'s luxe home. Mollen was spotted at a glam bash held at Bendet's Water Mill home over the weekend for the designer's Alice + Olivia clothing line. Mollen mingled with guests and looked "happy and in good spirits," says a spy. "I'm just in that mode of: Let's be social, let's have fun," Bendet told us. "I've got Jenny staying with me. We're just having fun girl summer." The designer is staying out East along with her three daughters and their friends, and tells us even "all the animals are girls." Bendet says she is intent on making the Hamptons "fun again." "I want the whole summer to just feel fun and light." She said that they did yoga with TikTok star **Caleb Simpson** over the weekend, and she plans to throw weekly dinner parties with a wellness twist. This recent party offered poolside massages, IV drips and Botox. Mollen and Biggs split in May after 18 years of marriage. The couple remains on great terms and is focused on raising their two sons, **Lazlo**, 8, and **Sid**, 12, their spokesperson previously told Page Six.

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Shakira sparkles "Whenever, Wherever" she goes — including in Miami for her world tour.

MediaPunch/BACKGRID

Page Six®

In a snit over split

FORMER "Malcolm in the Middle" star **Frankie Muniz** announced on Instagram that he and his wife of six years, **Paige Price**, have decided to divorce — and Price offered her support in the comment section following bizarre backlash. "Following a period of separation that we kept private, Paige and I have decided to move forward with ending our marriage," Muniz, 40, wrote on Wednesday. But the announcement was actually his second go at revealing the split. His original post, which he quickly deleted, had been illustrated with a video of the couple dancing with their son, **Mauz**, 5 — along with the caption, "Who says you cant stay best friends with your baby mama?" — that some deemed inappropriate given the news. But Price, 33, wrote beneath the new post Wednesday, "Frankie, I am so sorry that you felt the need to delete an old funny video of our family because people are so cruel to you." She added that "this world is so f--ked."

Luxe meets "Lux"! **Demi Lovato** dons leather for **Rosalía**'s tour stop in LA.

@NIKOTYLERJPEG/BACKGRID

Dem Karlie's family values

KARLIE Kloss maintains that her politics are as lefty as ever, in spite of her in-laws. The model made a rare comment on her husband **Josh Kushner**'s Trump family ties in a Bloomberg Originals interview, published Wednesday. "I'm a Democrat. It's possible to have relationships with people who you politically don't align with," she insisted. "And I think this country has always been a place for dialogue. We have to be able to talk to each other." Kloss, whose partner's brother, **Jared Kushner**, is married to President **Donald Trump**'s daughter **Ivanka Trump**, added, "I know who I am. I know the values that guide my life and the issues that I care about. So, you know, I haven't lost sight of who I am, but also, it's my husband's family." The former Victoria's Secret Angel also clarified she has "never met President Trump." Her remarks come six years after she told "Watch What Happens Live" viewers she "voted as a Democrat in 2016 and . . . plan[ned] to do the same in 2020." Kloss, 33, and Josh, 41, got married in 2018.

Kate has ball at Wimbledon

KATE Middleton returned to the early rounds at Wimbledon's All England Club for the first time since 2023. The Princess of Wales sat in the stands and also spent time shaking hands and even collecting tickets from fans who were waiting to enter the stadium. Later, she spent time with children from the Shine Camera Club, an organization that helps disadvantaged youth develop photography skills and confidence. Middleton has attended Wimbledon almost every year since 2011. She has served as the patron of the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club since 2016.

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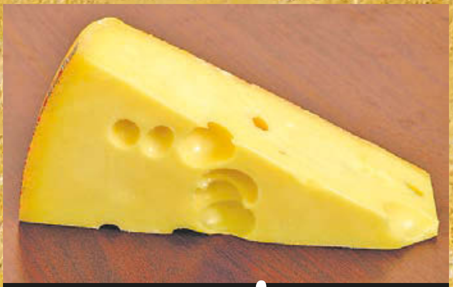

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Ora's hot vacay

It's hot 'n' steamy in Greece — and that's the way Rita Ora loves it, as the 35-year-old superstar songstress soaks up the sun yachting off Mykonos on holiday with close pals.

Instagram/Rita Ora

HAIR'S GOOD NEWS

Cancer Rx vs. gray

By FARAN KRENTCIL

Emerging research says that it may be possible to reverse the effects of graying hair without dyeing.

That's according to Spanish doctors who recently noticed that as their lung-cancer patients began to recover thanks to new immunotherapy drugs, their hair began gaining pigment.

At first, the scientists thought it was a fluke — until they realized that even patients outside their care were getting their hair color back after taking new treatment drugs like Keytruda, Opdivo and Tecentriq.

That led University of Alabama scientist Melissa Harris to start digging into the science behind it.

Root of problem

So, when will going gray be passé? Sooner than you think.

For starters, less than 25% of people have a significant amount of gray hair by age 50, according to a 2012 study in the British Journal of Dermatology. But nearly 90% of us do have some pigment loss before hitting the big 5-0.

That's due to melanocytes, the pigment cells living inside your hair follicles that pump color into every strand as it grows.

They're supposed to keep getting fueled by a backup crew of melanocyte stem cells, but factors like stress, fatigue and our bodies' aging repair cycles get in the way.

Eventually, the pigment cycle gets depleted beyond repair, and the body doesn't create new melanin, the colorful cell byproduct that also determines our skin and eye color.

Another big factor is genetics, which means if your grandmother was Cruella de Vil, you may inherit her signature shock of white hair. (Speaking of dogs, they, too, can go gray, getting a "sugar face" around the muzzle or, in the case of some huskies and hounds, a white streak along their back.)

Testing timetable

Scientists think that immunotherapy drug treatments help with graying hair because they're designed to reawaken and strengthen the body's existing stem cells, which act as tiny maintenance men that clear debris, repair damage and restart natural healing cycles. (Think of it this way: If your body is an apartment building, stem cells are your supers.)

While the drugs were created for the crucial work of helping stop cancer, a side effect is rebooting the pigmentation process for hair strands.

At the University of Alabama, Harris and her team are isolating the immunotherapy treatments for hair pigment alone. But they haven't yet tested their findings on human subjects, which means it'll be months — at minimum — before we know how this can apply to the average shampooer.

Until then, supplements have hit the market, promising to reverse our gray matter. In 2021, a supplement called Arey hit the market with claims that it could "repigment" hair beginning to desaturate by reducing oxidative stress.

Killed over a spot

‘Good man’ shot in Fla. parking lot

By ANTHONY BLAIR

An Army veteran was shot dead outside a Florida Walmart in a dispute over a parking spot — allegedly by a woman who claimed it was in self-defense.

Bart Diguglielmo, a retired staff sergeant with the Army, was killed after the woman shot him in front of the supercenter in North Lauderdale, just before 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, the Broward Sheriff’s Office said.

Diguglielmo, 62, and the female shooter, who has not been identified, were embroiled in a “verbal altercation” over a parking space before the fight turned deadly, officials said.

Shocking cellphone footage shows Diguglielmo seemingly exchanging angry words with the woman.

At one point he puts up his hands and slowly walks toward her as she backs away — then she pulls out a gun and shoots him while he is still several feet away.

The footage shows him clutching his stomach before falling to the ground.

Blood and screams

The woman is then seen placing the gun on top of a car while waiting for law enforcement to arrive, witnesses reporting her screaming and crying. She also continued shouting at Diguglielmo as he lay on the ground bleeding.

“I was walking up and heard a lady screaming,” witness David Anderson told CBS News Miami. “She was screaming, and she was saying a lot of things.”

Diguglielmo was rushed to Broward Health Medical Center, where he died.

‘Very good person’

The shooter remained at the scene and is cooperating with the investigation, officials said.

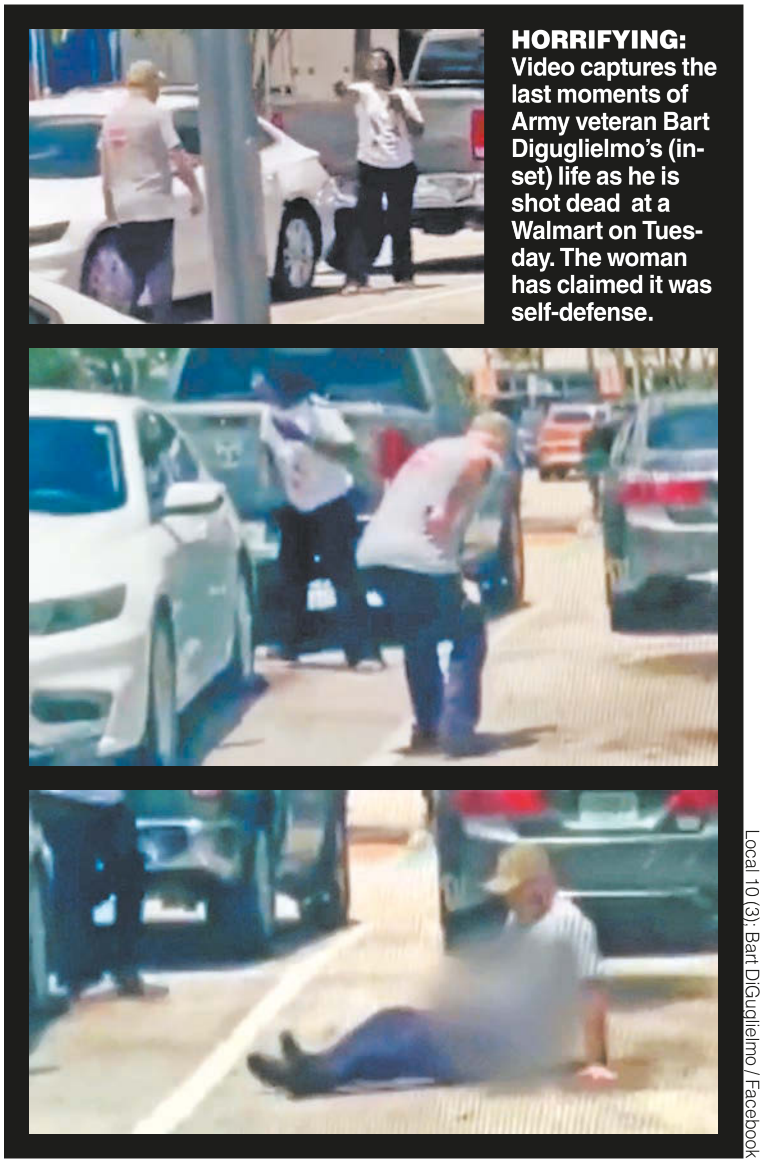
The Broward County State Attorney’s Office will determine whether she will face criminal charges.

Diguglielmo’s daughter, Amanda, broke down in tears while speaking out — revealing the two had only recently rekindled their relationship after years of estrangement.

“I just don’t think anybody deserved to lose their life over a parking spot,” she told Local 10. “He was a good man.”

Amanda pushed back on reports that her father had made advances toward the woman, insisting he would never have left her feeling so threatened.

“I heard one news site say it was over a parking spot. Another says it was because my dad was making some type of advance towards the woman, which I will completely debunk because my dad is not that person,” she said. “He’s not perfect but not someone that would do this to this extreme.”



HORRIFYING: Video captures the last moments of Army veteran Bart Diguglielmo’s (inset) life as he is shot dead at a Walmart on Tuesday. The woman has claimed it was self-defense.

Local 10 (3); Bart DiGuglielmo / Facebook

She added that she was “hesitant” to talk but wanted her father “to be remembered for who he was and not who the media is portraying him to be.”

A native of Hammonton, NJ, Diguglielmo lived in Lauderhill and served as a combat nurse, combat medic and tactical communications expert, according to his Facebook profile. His sister described him as a decorated veteran of Operation Desert Storm.

“He was a Christian man and a very good person and would not hurt anyone,” the sister said.

Shark lurks off LI

Swimmers at a Long Island beach had a “Jaws”-dropping experience — spotting a massive 9-foot shark that shut down the water as patrols are now in search of the beast.

The enormous fish was first seen on Thursday just before 10:30 a.m. at Point Lookout in Hempstead, prompting the town’s shark-patrol units to spring into action, officials told The Post.

“Once lifeguards confirmed the sighting — they red flagged the beach and now shark patrol is out on the water,” Hempstead Town Supervisor John Ferretti told The Post this morning.

Those trying to escape the humid, 90-plus degree day at a town beach in Hempstead had to look elsewhere for hours before the red flag was finally lifted, allowing swimmers back into the water by 2 p.m., town officials told The Post.

However, It is currently unclear whether the sighting may cause additional beach closures throughout the Fourth of July weekend if spotted again.

The sighting comes just barely two months after a 9-foot, 423-pound great white shark was spotted close by the Jersey Shore.

Brandon Cruz

‘Jaws’ in Rockaway

A swarm of bull sharks shut down Rockaway Beach Thursday — much to the disappointment of swimmers looking to escape the grueling heat wave.

Multiple sightings of the aggressive predators forced lifeguards to raise the red flags across the entire coast around 11 a.m., the Parks Department confirmed.

The sharks have been playing in the waves for hours, officials said.

That meant the cool waters were cruelly out of reach for bathers during the hottest part of the afternoon when real-feel temperatures reached 105 degrees. *Katherine Donlevy*

Anti-Israel mom rattles upstate nabe

The middle-class upstate New York mom accused of donating $30,000 to a deadly terrorist group “turned more Muslim” after Oct. 7 and even forced her daughter to wear a hijab, a neighbor told The Post.

Catherine Beth Washburn — a 37-year-old mom of two from Irondequoit — who allegedly led a home-grown anti-Israel extremist group began wearing Muslim garb shortly after the Hamas attack on Israel in 2023, according to neighbors, who described the radical as standoffish and unfriendly.

She once screamed at her now-6-year-old daughter to “come inside and get dressed up” in her hijab, neighbor Donna Glover said.

Washburn wasn’t wearing the outfit when Glover moved into the quaint neighborhood outside Rochester around five years ago, she said — but after the start of the war in Gaza “she just turned more Muslim.”

A tattered Palestinian flag remained on the ranch-style home Thursday when The Post visited — three months after neighbors reported seeing a SWAT team break down the door and raid the house.

Washburn allegedly spearheaded the Direct Action Movement for Palestinian Liberation, an anti-Israel group formed in the wake of Oct. 7 that encourages sabotage and property destruction, according to prosecutors in the Western District of New York.

She is believed to have helped funnel $30,000 in cryptocurrency — through 80 separate transfers — to a terrorist in the Palestinian Islamic Jihad group in Gaza, once telling him “I wish every day were Oct. 7.”

Vaughn Golden and Jared Downing

2nd juice 'thief' still on loose

Boston cops have released photos of a second suspect wanted in the armed robbery of a kid's lemonade stand that rattled the community last month.

The still-at-large suspect (above) can be seen walking around shirtless, wearing black pants and carrying a black backpack after the June 10 stickup.

David Byrne, 12, and his 11-year-old sister Juliette were selling lemonade near their home in South Boston when two male juveniles passed by several times before walking up to their stand.

The alleged bandits asked the siblings if they accepted Apple Pay and before the Byrne children could respond, one of the thieves flashed a black firearm tucked into his waistband, according to cops.

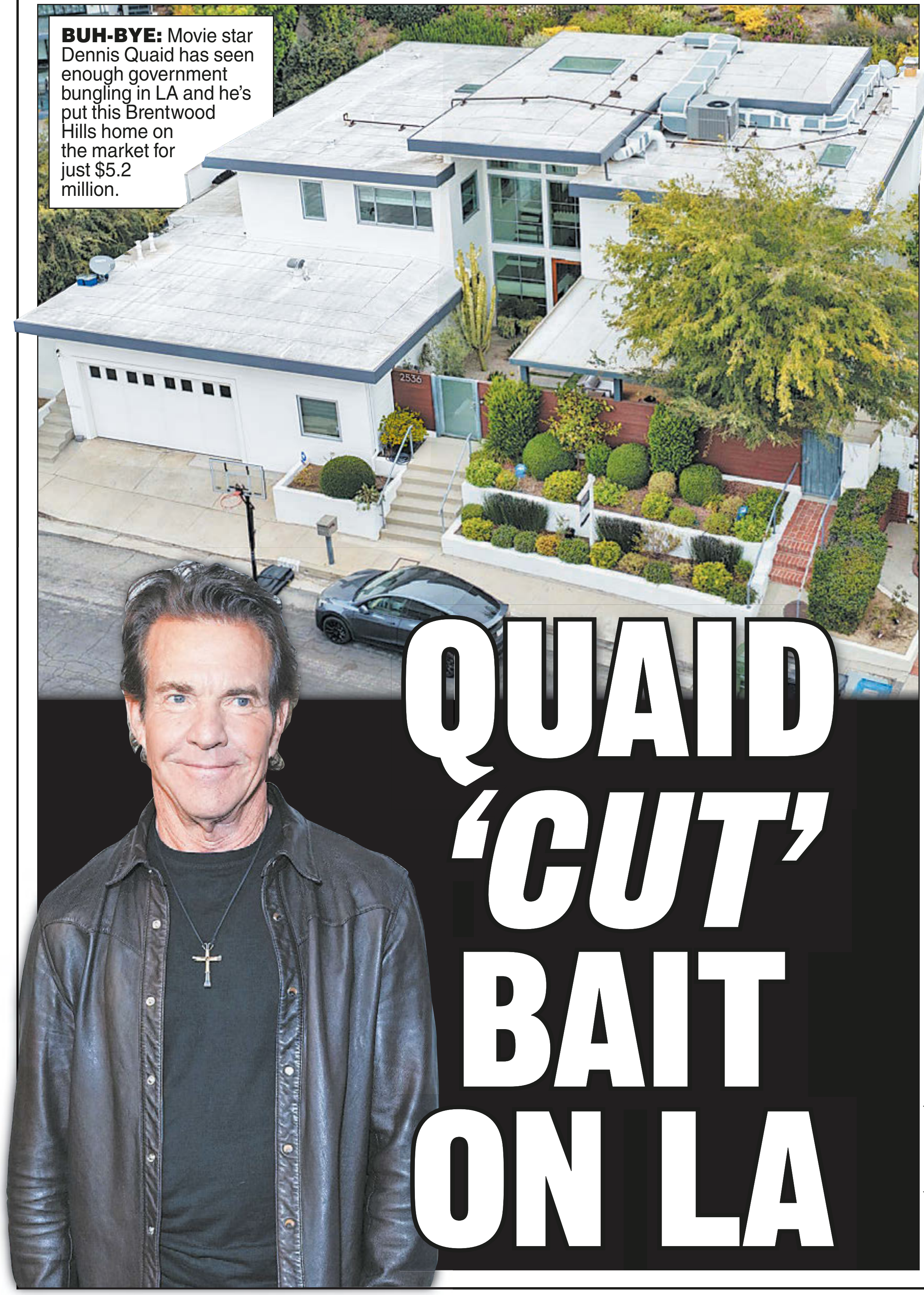
The other young thief snatched the siblings' cash box — which contained around $50. A 14-year-old boy was arrested after the theft and slapped with two counts of armed robbery and unlawful possession of a firearm. *Ella Morrison*

'Pay delay' cops growl

Fuming cops are blaming Mayor Mamdani for delaying their holiday pay ahead of the Fourth of July holiday — an error the NYPD later blamed on an "internal processing error" it was scrambling to fix.

City officials informed union leaders Wednesday that cops' holiday paychecks will be sent the third week of July rather than the second as has been done in past years, according to an email from Police Benevolent Association President Patrick Hendry sent to union members. *Larry Celona*

'*Used* to be a great town,' actor fumes



BUH-BYE: Movie star Dennis Quaid has seen enough government bungling in LA and he's put this Brentwood Hills home on the market for just $5.2 million.

CPR/D.SANCHEZ / BACKGRID

QUAID 'CUT' BAIT ON LA

By ROSS O'KEEFE

Hollywood just lost another star.

Dennis Quaid is making his Los Angeles exit official, putting his Brentwood Hills home up for sale for $5.2 million, taking a loss on it after slamming the area for going "downhill."

Quaid is selling his five-bed, six-bath abode, which stretches more than 4,000 square feet, as celebrities flee California due to a variety of reasons ranging from poor wildfire management to liberal policies.

His home's listing describes it as a "pristine, completely remodeled, two-story warm Contemporary done with great taste and quality at the end of a quiet, flat cul-de-sac street in a desirable Brentwood Hills location."

The home has a thin pool in the backyard with a back patio and stargazing terrace. Consistent white and timber tones can be seen throughout.

"The Substance" actor is listing his house for $1.3 million more than he bought it for back in 2017, but he's still taking a six-figure loss due to inflation.

Hopes were on Pratt

The listing comes a month after Quaid showed optimism about Los Angeles mayoral loser Spencer Pratt. "Go, Spencer Pratt," Quaid said when asked about the LA mayor's race.

When asked why, Quaid appeared puzzled. "Why? What are you talking about, why? Just look around, man," he laughed.

Quaid has said LA isn't what it once was. "It used to be such a great town, and the '90s was nice. And then it's been kind of going downhill, and I feel like people pay these taxes for no services is what it gets down to," he told Fox News.

"And then fire happens and it kind of exposes all those things that go on that should be taken care of," he continued. "So people are — people are angry and half angry, and they're half kind of feel like giving up, to tell you the truth."

Quaid had been a resident of both Tennessee and LA, with his primary residence in the Volunteer State. Other Hollywood stars who have left the area in recent years include Mark Wahlberg, Dean Cain and Nicole Kidman.

Tibetan fatally sets himself on fire outside UN

A Tibetan man protesting China's occupation fatally set himself on fire outside the United Nations headquarters in Manhattan Thursday evening, capturing the horrifying scene in livestreamed footage.

The protester, identified by a friend as Lobga Rangzen, was dressed in full monastic garb when he planted a Tibetan flag on the sidewalk and then self-immolated along the busy street during the evening rush, according to the video.

Rangzen, who has lived in the US for about 20 years, crumbled to the ground less than a minute after he was engulfed in flames as passing cars honked their horns.

About 15 seconds later, a pair of first responders doused the flames.

Rangzen, 42, was was pronounced dead at Bellevue Hospital.

The flag was still in place about an hour after the shocking display as cops investigated the scene.

Since March 2009, more than 150 people worldwide are known to have set themselves on fire to protest what they describe as "Chinese occupation," Free Tibet said. *Joe Marino*

‘Reflecting pool-igan’ bust

Olympian accused of ripping up blue liner

By RYAN KING

WASHINGTON — Former Olympic canoeist David Hearn has been indicted by a grand jury for allegedly damaging the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool last month.

Hearn, 67, is facing a felony destruction-of-property charge, punishable by up to 10 years in prison, for allegedly tearing up roughly 2 square feet of sealant from the pool’s bottom, DC US Attorney Jeanine Pirro announced.

The gold-winning former Olympic athlete was arrested on June 19 amid the Trump administration’s crackdown on alleged vandalism at the Reflecting Pool, which has been plagued by a nasty algae bloom and peeling sealant despite more than $16 million in renovations.

“The evidence will prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Hearn willfully destroyed property at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool,” Pirro declared. “This was a deliberate act.”

Pirro claims witnesses

Hearn told the Washington Post he was arrested after picking up a piece of the pool’s liner that was floating in the water, but denied destroying the sealant.

“I didn’t vandalize anything,” claimed Hearn, who competed at the Summer Games for the US in 1992, 1996 and 2000. “I didn’t destroy or break or peel anything. By the time I realized what was going on, I was being put in handcuffs.”

THERE ‘WATER’ BE A LAW! DC US Attorney Jeanine Pirro announced the arrest of ex-Olympian David Hearn (above, in his prime).

Pirro stressed that Hearn admitted to putting his hands in the water and claimed Park Service employees saw him “actually forcefully and violently pulling up and removing the bottom liner with both hands.”

She estimated he did over $1,000 worth of damage.

“A Parks employee actually told Hearn to stop,” Pirro said. “Hearn reacted by shouting at that Park’s employee, saying that she ‘cared too much’ about the Reflecting Pool. And why did she ‘even care’ since it wasn’t her pool?”

Denying the claims

Norm Eisden, Hearn’s attorney, accused Pirro’s office of lodging politically motivated charges against him.

“Davey Hearn is innocent. These charges are outrageous and should be alarming to every American,” Eisen said.

“This indictment reflects the Administration’s effort to shift blame for their own failures.”

The Reflecting Pool, long-plagued by leaks and algae, was ordered drained by the Trump administration in April. The job included coating the bottom with “American flag blue” sealant, fixing the joints in the concrete slabs, and installing a new $1.7 million ozone-based nanobubbler system to combat algae.

But upon reopening last month, a massive algae bloom quickly swept the iconic Reflecting Pool, and observers saw pieces of the sealant peel off.

That gave Trump’s critics fodder and attracted national attention.

Trump has blamed the algae problems and sealant peeling issues on vandals.

Pirro claims that over half a dozen people were arrested for vandalism, against whom her team is weighing potential legal action.

Post Weather Report

AccuWeather. Proven Superior Accuracy™ Visit AccuWeather.com

Friday

HOT

Today: Near-record temperatures and humid. High 97 to 103.

Tonight: Partly cloudy, a stray t-storm. Low 79 to 85.

Saturday

Tomorrow: Hot, humid; a heavy t-storm in the p.m.. High 92 to 98.

Tomorrow night: A heavy t-storm in the evening. Low 71 to 77.

Sunday

A p.m. t-storm. High 85 to 91.

Evening Showers/t-storms. Low 69 to 75.

Monday

A stray t-storm. High 76 to 82.

Evening Rain. Low 65 to 71.

Almanac

YESTERDAY'S CONDITIONS AT CENTRAL PARK THROUGH 6PM

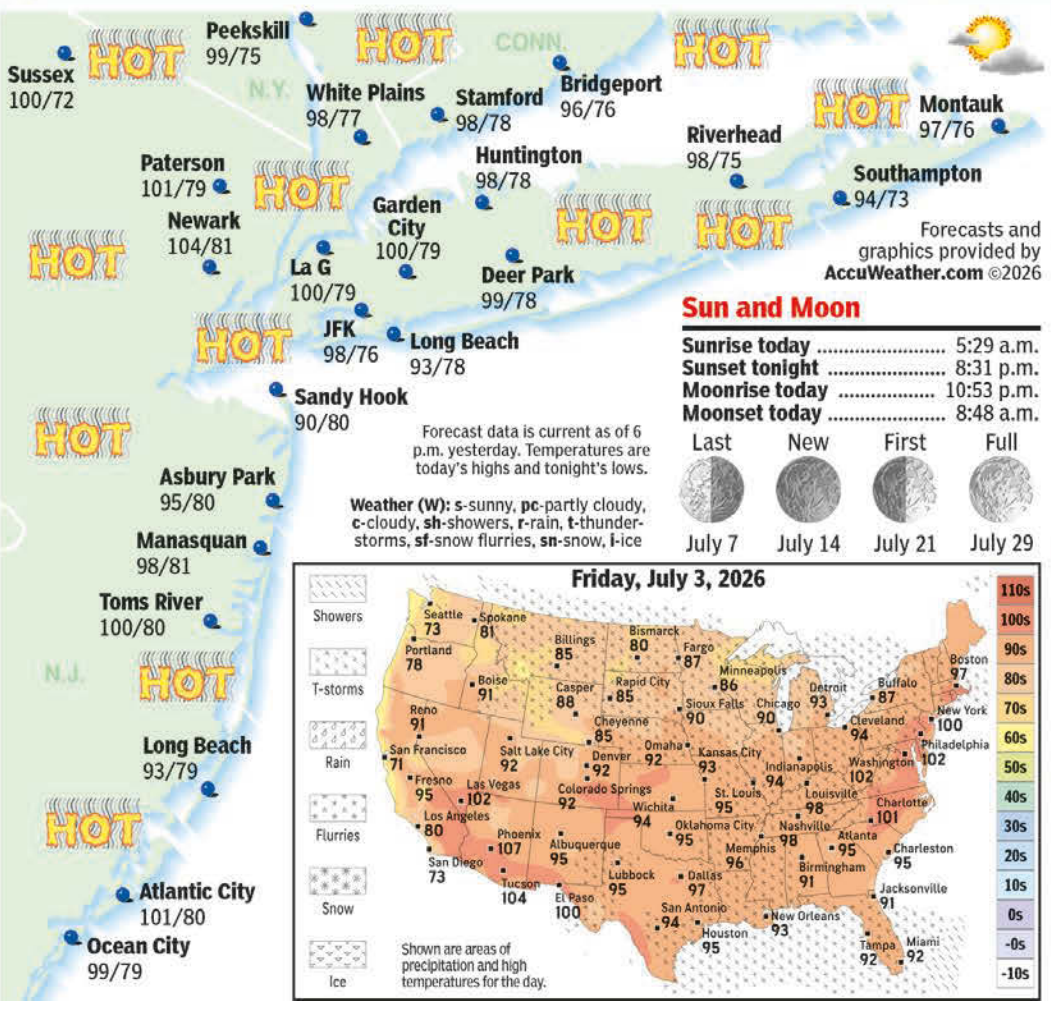
Temperature
High: 100, Low: 82, Mean: 91

Departure from Normal
Yesterday: +15 degrees

Precipitation
Yesterday: 0.00”, Month: 0.00”,
Year: 17.82”, Normal year to date: 23.96”

Cooling Degree days yesterday 26
Total for the month (normal) 45 (23)
Total since Jan. 1 (normal) 445 (331)
Last year to date 358
Heat Index (at noon yest.) 104
UV index (for Fri.) .... 11 (Extreme)
Humidity (at noon) 43%

AIR QUALITY
Pollen: Low Predominant pollen: Trees, Grasses, Weeds
AQI rating: (for Fri.) .... Moderate


Sussex
100/72
HOT
Peekskill
99/75
N.Y.
HOT
CONN.
White Plains
98/77
Stamford
98/78
Bridgeport
96/76
HOT
Riverhead
98/75
HOT
Montauk
97/76
Paterson
101/79
HOT
Newark
104/81
Garden City
100/79
Huntington
98/78
HOT
HOT
Southampton
94/73
HOT
La G
100/79
Deer Park
99/78
HOT
JFK
98/76
Long Beach
93/78
Sandy Hook
90/80
HOT
Asbury Park
95/80
Manasquan
98/81
Toms River
100/80
N.J.
HOT
Long Beach
93/79
HOT
Atlantic City
101/80
Ocean City
99/79
Friday, July 3, 2026
Showers
T-storms
Rain
Flurries
Snow
Ice
Seattle 73
Spokane 81
Portland 78
Billings 85
Bismarck 80
Fargo 87
Minneapolis 86
Boise 91
Casper 88
Rapid City 85
Sioux Falls 90
Chicago 90
Detroit 93
Buffalo 87
Boston 97
Reno 91
Cheyenne 85
Cleveland 94
New York 100
San Francisco 71
Salt Lake City 92
Denver 92
Omaha 92
Kansas City 93
Indianapolis 94
Washington 102
Philadelphia 102
Fresno 95
Las Vegas 102
Colorado Springs 92
St. Louis 95
Louisville 98
Charlotte 101
Los Angeles 80
Wichita 94
Oklahoma City 95
Nashville 98
Atlanta 95
Phoenix 107
Albuquerque 95
Memphis 96
Charleston 95
San Diego 73
Lubbock 95
Dallas 97
Birmingham 91
Tucson 104
El Paso 100
Jacksonville 91
San Antonio 94
New Orleans 93
Houston 95
Tampa 92
Miami 92
110s
100s
90s
80s
70s
60s
50s
40s
30s
20s
10s
0s
-0s
-10s
Shown are areas of precipitation and high temperatures for the day.

Forecasts and graphics provided by **AccuWeather.com** ©2026

Forecast data is current as of 6 p.m. yesterday. Temperatures are today’s highs and tonight’s lows.

Weather (W): s-sunny, **pc**-partly cloudy, **c**-cloudy, **sh**-showers, **r**-rain, **t**-thunderstorms, **sf**-snow flurries, **sn**-snow, **i**-ice

Sun and Moon

Sunrise today .... 5:29 a.m.
Sunset tonight .... 8:31 p.m.
Moonrise today .... 10:53 p.m.
Moonset today .... 8:48 a.m.

Last	New	First	Full
July 7	July 14	July 21	July 29

New York Tides

High Tide for	TODAY 1st	TODAY 2nd	TOMORROW 1st	TOMORROW 2nd
Coney Island	10:47a	10:46p	11:28a	11:28p
Fire Island	10:44a	11:06p	11:32a	11:50p
Hempstead	1:45a	2:17p	2:26a	2:57p
Huntington	1:56a	2:28p	2:38a	3:08p
Jones Inlet	10:31a	10:30p	11:12a	11:12p
Montauk Point	12:32p	---	12:28a	1:17p
Port Washington	1:42a	2:14p	2:23a	2:53p
Sandy Hook	10:51a	10:50p	11:32a	11:32p

Regional cities

Regional cities	TODAY	TOMORROW
Albany	98/72/t	95/62/t
Danbury	99/72/pc	95/69/t
Glens Falls	97/69/t	87/58/t
Gr Barrington	97/69/t	90/60/t
Kingston	99/73/t	95/68/t
Liberty	92/72/t	88/64/t
Monticello	94/70/t	88/64/t
Newburgh	100/75/pc	94/69/t
Poughkeepsie	98/71/t	94/67/t
Saratoga Springs	98/72/t	90/59/t
Stroudsburg	100/73/t	94/68/t
Torrington	98/72/t	92/66/t
Syracuse	92/71/t	85/63/t

World cities

World cities	TODAY	TOMORROW
Athens	92/75/s	90/75/t
Baghdad	111/81/s	112/82/pc
Beijing	98/73/pc	94/73/pc
Berlin	74/55/pc	72/59/c
Cairo	97/76/pc	97/77/pc
Dublin	70/60/c	70/57/sh
Geneva	83/58/s	87/58/s
Hong Kong	91/82/r	88/82/t
Jerusalem	84/68/s	84/69/s
Kabul	85/67/pc	88/69/pc
London	81/58/pc	84/61/s
Madrid	99/70/s	102/73/s
Mexico City	74/58/r	76/59/r
Montreal	89/69/pc	83/63/t
Moscow	79/61/pc	69/58/sh
Paris	82/55/s	86/62/s
Rio de Janeiro	79/69/pc	75/66/sh
Rome	89/71/s	91/68/s
Sydney	67/51/s	66/54/s
Tokyo	81/68/pc	81/71/c

NICK LaLOTA
Fighting sanctuary laws.

Funds put on 'ICE' by LI pol

Long Island Congressman Nick LaLota is doubling down on his threats to withhold federal funding for infrastructure upgrades from East Hampton unless its local government repeals its sanctuary laws.

Last month, Rep. LaLota put roughly $9 million that East Hampton requested in Community Project Funding in limbo after both the town and village passed a pair of bills — written by a Latino advocacy organization — that banned its local police departments from cooperating with Immigrations and Customs Enforcement on civil enforcement.

"I'm giving the town a choice, and they'll have to deal with the consequences of their decision," the Republican told The Post about his ultimatum.

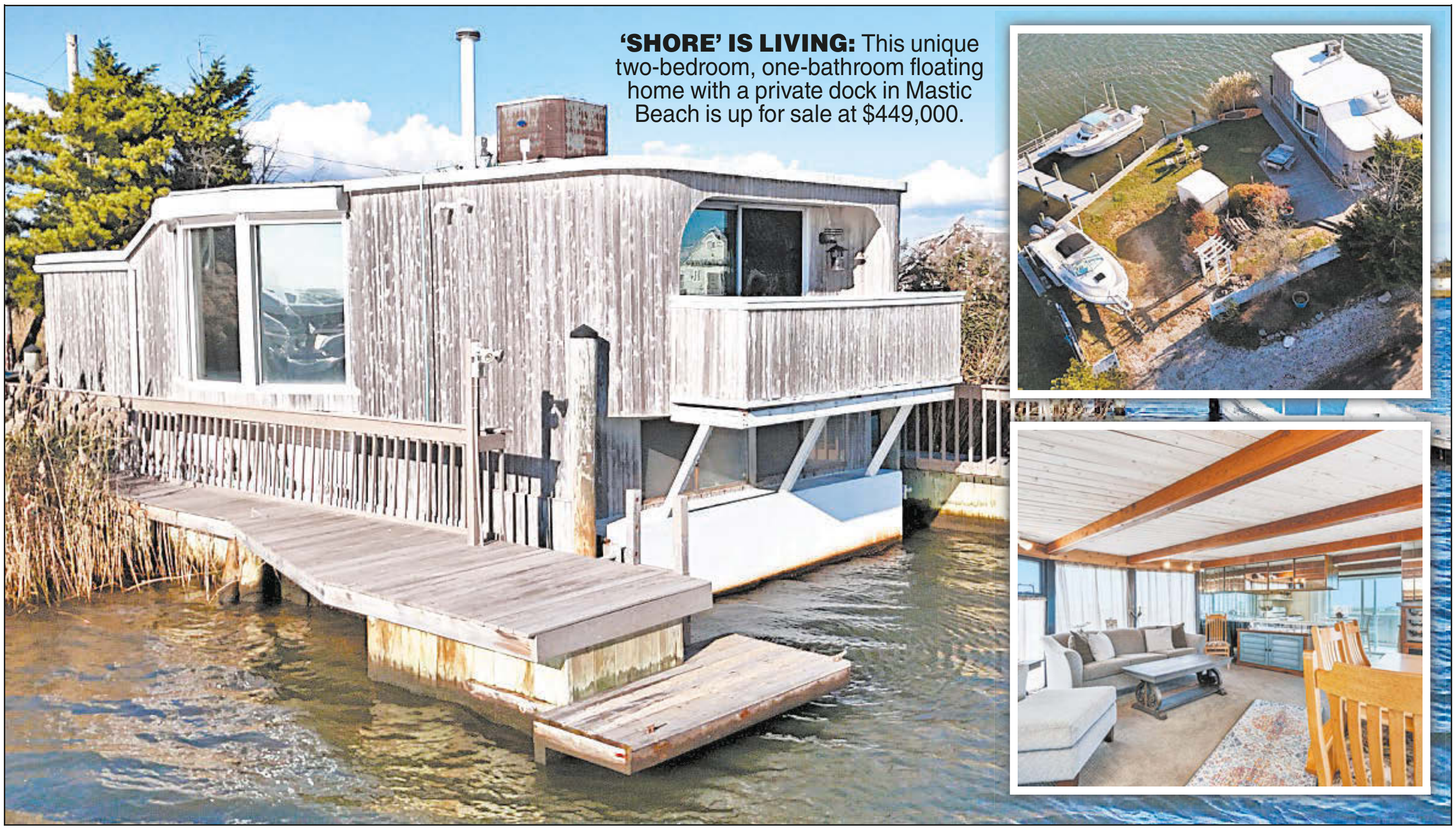
The money from Congress' Community Project Funding are federal dollars that individual House members request for specific projects in their districts each budget cycle. *Brandon Cruz*

Fake doc, pal busted

A Long Island fraudster posed as a doctor and even doled out prescriptions at a Queens clinic while using her accomplice's medical credentials to bilk Medicaid, state prosecutors announced Thursday.

Francia Aguila, 53, and Gifty Appiah, 59, of Staten Island, were slapped with charges as part of an "elaborate Medicaid fraud scheme" allegedly totaling over $100,000 that lasted more than three years, according to the state attorney general's office. *David Propper*

Rare waterfront house for sale on LI



'SHORE' IS LIVING: This unique two-bedroom, one-bathroom floating home with a private dock in Mastic Beach is up for sale at $449,000.

Alexa Rappa from All Media NY Inc.

JUST AFLOAT: ONLY ONE LEFT

By MARY K. JACOB

A rare waterfront property in Mastic Beach is offering buyers the chance to live directly on the water, not just next to it.

The two-bedroom, one-bathroom floating home at 714 Riviera Drive has come to market for $449,000, and according to its listing agent, it is the only one of its kind on Long Island, and it always will be.

The residence sits on Narrow Bay and blends the conveniences of a standard house with the novelty of life on the water.

'Special permit'

The property includes a full kitchen, central air conditioning, propane heat, gas cooking and updated electrical service. Custom windows with electronically controlled shades were installed within the past three years.

Listing agent Eric Boorum of Douglas Elliman said the setup cannot be replicated anywhere else nearby.

"It's not only rare, it's completely unique in the area. There is no other floating home in Mastic Beach and there will never be another one."

The home's status is protected by a decades-old permit. The Town of Brookhaven generally bans floating homes, but code makes an exception for structures that existed before the rule took effect.

The seller holds documentation proving the property qualifies for that carve-out. Boorum explained why the exemption won't be extended to future buyers of other properties.

"The seller received a special permit years ago, and they will not issue another one due to changes in code and revitalization plans across the waterfront in Mastic Beach."

Under the applicable section of town code, a special permit must be renewed within 90 days whenever the home changes hands to anyone outside the owner's family. Boorum said that requirement won't stop a new owner from settling in for the long haul.

"The purchaser will renew the permit and will enjoy the same benefits."

The sale includes a .18 acre waterfront lot with roughly 60 feet of bulkhead, a private dock, a driveway and storage space, along with a deck built for outdoor entertaining.

A balcony off the kitchen looks out over the bay.

Property taxes on the home run just $665 annually.

Brooklyn woman's rent-'con'trol allegations

A Brooklyn woman allegedly used spoofed documents to cheat the system and get state-funded affordable housing, according to authorities.

Adina Hodges, 37, was arrested and charged on Wednesday with offering a false instrument for filing and perjury for submitting false information about her income and employment status to a Brooklyn affordable housing management company, according to the New York City Department of Investigation.

Hodges allegedly sent in a "reaffirmation of income" form on July 2, 2021, attesting that a "tenant income certification" form she previously submitted to the company was authentic, officials said.

An investigation revealed that her reaffirmation was "materially false" and that Hodges allegedly submitted fraudulent bank records, pay stubs and an employment verification letter to secure her new digs, the DOI said in a press release. *Zoe Hussain*

Dem rips rich-get-richer budget

Mam dumps on The Bronx

THANKS FOR NUTHIN': Bronx Councilwoman Althea Stevens voted against the mayor's $126 billion budget, saying it lavished money on already-rich districts and shortchanged hers.

Hans Pennink

By MATTHEW FISCHETTI

The lone City Council Democrat who opposed the Big Apple's newly passed roughly $126 billion budget slammed Mayor Mamdani, claiming he short-changed her constituents while wealthier districts received more funding.

Bronx Councilwoman Althea Stevens blasted the democratic socialist mayor over what she called a lack of "equity" in his first budget — accusing him of not allotting enough cash for her district, which faces high rates of poverty and gun violence.

"What made this even more difficult was seeing districts with higher incomes and greater access to resources receive significantly larger investments while neighborhoods like mine continue to fight for the basics," she said in a statement.

"Equity cannot simply be a word we use in speeches or campaign slogans. Equity means directing resources where the needs are greatest."

Joins Republicans

The Council late Tuesday approved the record-breaking $125.8 billion spending plan for the 2027 fiscal year that started July 1 in a 45-6 vote, with Stevens crossing party lines to join the five dissenting Republicans on the legislative body.

Some lefty Council members, including Brooklyn DSA Councilwoman Shahana Hanif and Progressive Caucus Co-Chair Sandy Nurse (D-Brooklyn) publicly voiced their support for Stevens, despite voting to approve the budget.

"I support her 100%," Hanif posted to X, in response to a City and State op-ed Stevens wrote about her opposing vote.

"Truly, a shameful outcome this year. Standing with @althea4theBX!" Nurse posted.

Stevens' District 16, which covers the South Bronx communities of Morrisania, Concourse, Highbridge and Morris Heights, received some $11.1 million in capital and expense funding, a Council spokesperson said.

"We're proud of this budget, and the overwhelming support it received from 45 Democratic Council members," said the rep for Council Speaker Julie Menin's office.

Councilwoman Selvena Brooks-Powers (D-Queens), who also voted yes on the spending plan, still lambasted Hizzoner for failing to fund a trauma center in her District 31, which covers Far Rockaway and other neighborhoods.

"The @NYCMayor has repeatedly said 'healthcare is a human right.' But those words ring hollow when his budget includes no capital funding for Far Rockaway's Healthcare Trauma Access Center," she posted on X.

In an interview with The Post, the councilwoman said that a trauma center would have saved the life of NYPD Detective Jonathan Diller, who was fatally shot during a March 2024 traffic stop outside of her district office.

"His son would be raised by him. His wife would not be a widow today. And I think it's irresponsible to not invest in communities that we know have this gap," she said.

Community advocates have long pushed for a Level 1 or Level 2 trauma center on Far Rockaway, which has relied on Jamaica Hospital for serious injuries after the closure of Peninsula Hospital in 2012.

Still needs state's OK

The trauma center still requires state approval and would need to find an operator before anything could be built.

While Far Rockaway doesn't meet the case volume for the Level 1 or 2 trauma center that locals have advocated for, officials have considered pushing for a Level 3 center with higher staffing.

Former Mayor Eric Adams' administration allocated $50 million in capital investment money for a potential site for a center.

The mayor's office didn't comment on Stevens' claims, but said it was in touch with Brooks-Powers and "committed to continuing the conversation and working on a solution."

"We're working with her and the other electeds in the area to try and come up with other alternative options, such as expanding trauma care access through existing facilities on the peninsula," said Mamdani's senior spokesperson Dora Pekec.

Mayor outraces prez to July 4th podium

Mayor Mamdani will give a presidential-style speech Friday for America's 250th birthday in what City Hall billed as a "major address" — just hours before President Trump delivers his own remarks.

Hizzoner will reflect on "New York City's role in our national history" and its "position as the nation's symbolic gateway," City Hall officials said in a press release, noting Mamdani will speak from a desk once owned by George Washington.

"This desk is older than the Resolute Desk," the mayor's office said, referring to the historic, writing table that sits in the Oval Office.

Mamdani "will argue that the American story has always been one of contradiction, and trace the experiences of Indigenous people, enslaved Africans, immigrants and generations of Americans who arrived seeking freedom and opportunity," officials shared in a sneak peek of the address.

The mayor will be surrounded by recently naturalized citizens, which his team called "symbolic" after the US Supreme Court narrowly upheld birthright citizenship this week and "comes amidst national backdrop of anti-immigrant sentiments and policies coming out of White House."

The address is set for 10 a.m., as Mamdani speaks from the "Governor's Room" of City Hall.

Hannah Fierick and David Propper

THOMAS CROOKS
Tried to kill Trump.

Don '24 slay-try stunner

A Secret Service counter-drone operator futilely searched the internet for the location of the rooftop on which President Trump's would-be assassin was spotted as shots rang out in July 2024 in Butler, Pa., according to a Department of Homeland Security inspector general report released on Thursday.

The report concluded the Service "missed multiple opportunities to detect, prevent and disrupt" deranged gunman Thomas Crooks' attempted assassination, including shocking communications failures that resulted in the president's protective detail never being warned that an armed man had climbed onto a roof 155 yards from where Trump was speaking.

Not knowing where the rooftop was situated relative to the stage, the counter-drone operator apparently resorted to Google.

Victor Nava

Legionnaires' shock on UES

The New York City Health Department has launched a probe into a concerning cluster of Legionnaires' disease cases along the Upper East Side — with officials trying to track down the source of the outbreak.

Two people have been diagnosed with the potentially fatal pneumonia-like illness in the neighborhoods of Carnegie Hill and Yorkville as of Thursday, with possible additional cases pending test results, according to the Health Department. *Zoe Hussain*

Beau's alligator horror

The boyfriend who desperately tried to save Florida hiker Brittany Clark from the killer jaws of a massive alligator that ripped her arms apart said she didn't deserve to die in such a horrific way.

"I'm just still in disbelief of what took place. We had so many things planned out and memories to be made," the 31-year-old victim's boyfriend, Chance Allison, wrote in an emotional Facebook post Wednesday — which included an array of photos of them together.

Allison desperately fought to wrench Clark from the 13-foot gator after it clamped its jaws onto her while the couple and her roommate, Jayden Hernandez, were swimming in the Econlockhatchee River at Little Big Econ State Forest in Seminole County on Sunday.

Audio from the 911 call obtained by The Post revealed details of the attack, with a woman describing Clark's injuries as "horrible," adding that "one of her arms is completely off and the other one is like attached barely."

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission said that Clark did not appear to have done anything "malicious" to provoke the alligator.

Anna Young

3 kids take their 'stand'

Three young Michigan brothers took their fight against a $400 licensing fee to run their beloved lemonade stand all the way to the state house — successfully convincing lawmakers to take up their cause.

The Mielke boys, Ethan, 13, Seth, 11, and Jonathan, 8, testified at a committee hearing in Lansing on June 11 before lawmakers.

After the moving testimony, the Michigan House of Representatives voted unanimously to pass House Bill 6007 on June 25, allowing minors to run lemonade stands without the burden of permits and licensing fees.

Zoe Hussain

This is a 'sticker'-up! Cars now at $50K

'LOTS' OF PAIN NATIONWIDE: Kelley Blue Book data revealed new-car buyers paid an average price of $49,220 in May.

Jason Henry for CA Post

JACKING UP THE PRICES

By AURIELLE WEISS

Americans are driving straight into a new era of higher car costs.

The average price of a new car is drifting toward $50,000 as Kelley Blue Book data revealed the American new-car buyer paid $49,220 in May.

Other reports from Cars.com confirmed that prices are rising, revealing the average sticker tag is just above $50,000.

And rates are only growing, as data from Kelley Blue Book shows a 1.2% year-over-year increase.

Just 15 years ago, the average price for a new car was only $29,000 to $30,000. During that period, the US Bureau of Labor Statistics reported inflation was at a steady 3.0% — from December-to-December.

However, things are a bit different today. Americans are looking at an inflation rate of about 4.2% to 4.3% year-over-year from May. This was the most stark increase in about three years, and largely in part by the war in Iran putting extra pressure on prices.

There's another reason behind the price increase, though, and it's slightly complicated.

It's not just about manufacturing costs — which are rising. It's also, per reports in Forbes, because car makers are prioritizing high end finishes like leather trims, touchscreens, sophisticated entertainment systems and more.

Demand for EVs

Because consumers are willing, and want, to pay for them.

At the same time, as gas prices continue to soar, Kelley Blue Book parent company Cox Automotive revealed that 76% of people searching for cars say they want models that are either electric or fuel efficient. These cars are also sometimes in the more expensive categories.

For example, the Lexus NX starts at $45,000, but quickly goes up to about $53,000 based on the package.

As it's Toyota-owned, the NX car itself is practical, well-built and packed with the essentials. The luxury SUV gets 25 miles per gallon, has a nifty five seats and offers that quiet comfort drivers like.

Kia has also become a major player in the $50,000 range. The EV6 Wind AWD is its mid-level electric crossover and features dual-motor all-wheel drive, with 320 horsepower.

It has an EPA-estimated range of 295–319 miles per charge — and fast 800V charging capability — all for around $54,300. So a bit pricer but gives drivers a bit more.

Value vehicles

Despite the daunting price tag, there are still affordable buys and folks who have an appetite for a better deal. In fact, many are even American-made with a much prettier price — all under $35,000.

For example, the auto giant behind Chrysler, Jeep and Ram announced plans to drop a score of new, lower-priced cars with models less than $30,000.

Chrysler will now add three new crossover utility vehicles to its lineup, including two priced at less than $30,000. Parent company Stellantis announced that nine new models under $40,000 will hit the market by 2030.

Recently, Cars.com posted its most affordable cars from its American Made Index, where Toyota took the top spot with the most vehicles made right in the USA. The report found 86 vehicles that qualified but highlighted just a few of the greatest gets.

911 call after NFLer's brother 'killed' ma

A frantic 911 call captured Calais Campbell's siblings asking for a welfare check on their mother because they couldn't get hold of her after the NFL star's schizophrenic brother allegedly killed her inside her Atlanta home Tuesday.

The caller, only identified as "Mr. Campbell," called for police to be sent to the Buckhead townhome June 30 after neighbors spotted 41-year-old Ciarre Campbell driving a car owned by his 71-year-old mother, Nateal Campbell, according to audio shared by the Atlanta Police.

Nateal Campbell was found unresponsive inside her home, as her son was accused of cutting her neck with a knife, according to WSB-TV.

Ciarre Campbell, who is two years older than Calais Campbell, was said to have been diagnosed with multiple mental illnesses.

"It was kind of a wellness check, my brother, he's mentally ill, he's been diagnosed with schizophrenia and some other things. He stays with my mother, and this morning we're trying to get in" the caller told a dispatcher.

The caller, who had been locked out of the home, said Ciarre Campbell told them their mother wasn't in the house despite witnesses disputing the claim.

Nicholas McEntyre

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Tragic fest baby born alive

A baby found dead at a Michigan music festival was born alive inside the porta-potty where it was found alongside the placenta and umbilical cord, according to reports.

Fluid found inside the baby's lungs and stomach showed it was breathing at birth Sunday inside the grim toilet at the Electric Forest four-day festival in Rothbury, sources told WoodTV of post-mortem results.

Michigan State Police confirmed an autopsy was done but said it was "unable to confirm the results" before getting an "official autopsy report."

The baby — a neonate, meaning younger than 28 days — was found by an employee of a restroom vending company carrying out maintenance.

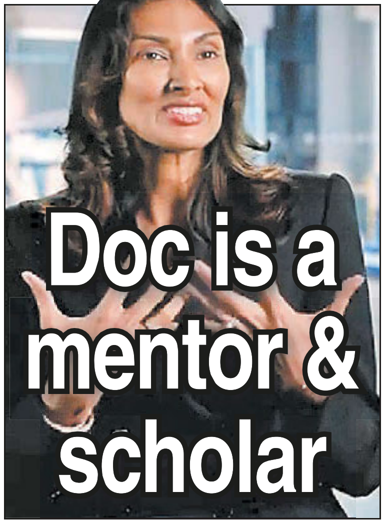
The cause of death hasn't been released, but Lt. Pat Agema said Tuesday that the death isn't classified as a homicide. *Chris Bradford*

'GIVING BACK'

American Dreamers

Through July 4, The Post, in conjunction with the Milken Center for Advancing the American Dream, is featuring US citizens explaining what the American dream means to them in 2026 — including Padmanee Sharma. An immunologist and oncologist at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, she is one of the nation's preeminent researchers into specialized cancers.

Doc is a mentor & scholar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BOOSTER: Padmanee Sharma, aided by others, is following their lead.

IT feels, to me, like I've been living the American Dream from the time we arrived in this country in 1980.

My family is from Guyana. We were refugees running away from a terrible situation in the country.

I came to a country [in America] where men and women went to school, boys and girls went to school, all religious backgrounds went to school — everybody, with any skin color, it didn't matter — they all went to school and had an education. That, to me, was already the American Dream.

My parents could not afford to send us to college. When we came to this country, they each worked about three jobs, just to afford for us to live in a very tiny one-bedroom basement apartment. So, philanthropy was a big part of me achieving my American dream.

I won a scholarship to go to Boston University. From there, I went into an MD-PhD program, which was also funded, initially, from philanthropy. My first grant to do my research work was through philanthropy through the Prostate Cancer Foundation.

I hope that every time I'm taking care of my patients, I hope that every time I'm making a discovery in my lab, I hope that every time I'm writing a new clinical trial to try and test better treatments to cure cancer — I hope these are all ways that I'm giving back.

Paying it forward

I also hope that I'm giving back by mentoring the students in my lab, mentoring the clinical fellows in my clinic. By teaching my children about compassion and being a bigger part of society, that's also giving back. It really is up to each of us to reach out to each other and not be worried that we don't look like each other or we're probably not coming from the same backgrounds.

The American Dream Video Project showcases real stories that illuminate pathways to opportunity. Featured at the Milken Center for Advancing the American Dream (MCAAD), this series is part of the Center's celebration of America's 250th anniversary. For more information, visit mcaad.org.

Tex. Tesla crash guy arrested

A driver who was using Tesla's Autopilot when he crashed through a home and killed a grandmother has been arrested after the electric-car maker said its data shows he floored the gas pedal himself and "manually overrode" the self-driving feature.

Michael Butler, 44, was charged with manslaughter after he plowed his Tesla into a Katy, Texas, home at more than 70 mph last month, killing Martha Ávila, 76, the Harris County Sheriff's Office announced Wednesday.

Butler, who is also being sued by Ávila's family for the incident, allegedly drove the Tesla Model 3 off the road, over a lawn and through the front of Ávila's brick home on June 19, leaving a gaping hole, dramatic footage shows.

Butler, injured in the crash, told investigators that he had the vehicle's self-driving system engaged. *Patrick Reilly*

Sally Brompton Daily Horoscope

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT YOURSELF AND WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS AT SALLYBROMPTON.COM

♋ **CANCER**
(June 22-July 23)
Life is not a zero-sum game and other people don't have to fail for you to succeed. Keep that fact in mind today and don't hesitate to help even your rivals if you get the chance. You will be an even bigger winner if they win too.

♌ **LEO**
(July 24-Aug. 23)
You may be delighted by recent developments but not everyone is convinced it's for the best. Maybe you should point out to them that change is inevitable and that the bigger the change the bigger the opportunities. Only fools fear the future.

♍ **VIRGO**
(Aug. 24-Sept. 23)
You may be tempted to take things easy today but if you do you will look back later on and wish you had been more ambitious. Mars in the career area of your chart is about to provoke major changes - changes you must take advantage of.

♎ **LIBRA**
(Sept. 24-Oct. 23)
What occurs today may not turn your world upside down but it will set the scene for what's coming over the weekend. As one of the zodiac's cardinal signs you know that opportunities tend to come in batches, and the first batch is on its way.

♏ **SCORPIO**
(Oct. 24-Nov. 22)
It does not matter than no one else seems to have faith in what you are doing, it matters only that you don't give up. Even if some of your ideas contain obvious flaws you can overcome them with energy, enthusiasm and sheer self-belief.

♐ **SAGITTARIUS**
(Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)
Over the next few days you could find yourself seriously at odds with various people, including those you love and those you work for. You will need to protect yourself, but don't overstep the line and go from defensive action to aggression.

♑ **CAPRICORN**
(Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)
Your actions DO make a difference and for your own peace of mind you should keep telling yourself that throughout the day and into the weekend. You are not a powerless pawn destined to be sacrificed, you are a major piece in the cosmic game.

♒ **AQUARIUS**
(Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
If something doesn't look right today then stand back from it a bit and squint your eyes. If it still doesn't come into focus then ask someone you trust to tell you what they see. It could be you are looking at it from the wrong angle.

♓ **PISCES**
(Feb. 20-Mar. 20)
If you get the chance to do a good deed for a friend today then do it with no questions asked and expect no rewards. Later on you may have to behave in a more selfish, even ruthless, manner, so feel good about yourself while you can.

♈ **ARIES**
(March 21-April 20)
You need to get past your tendency to tell other people what they should do and how they should do it. The planets warn if you carry on trying to control both their thoughts and their deeds you may end up in charge of neither.

♉ **TAURUS**
(April 21-May 21)
There is a major luck factor working in your favor, so don't hold back from trying things that excite you but maybe also frighten you a bit. Some things will go wrong, of course, but the universe will catch you before you fall too far.

♊ **GEMINI**
(May 22-June 21)
The more you desire reaching a particular goal the more likely it is you will succeed. The power of your thoughts and emotions is such that if you combine them together they will create your future - and influence the world's future as well.

BIRTHDAY FRIDAY

The personal connections you make in the year ahead will come in useful not just socially but professionally too. The universe will send the right person your way at precisely the right time. It would be rude of you not to make use of them.

NEW YORK POST
America's oldest continuously published daily newspaper

What Regime Change?

Iran's move to seize Tehran's historic St. Peter Evangelical Church and evict 20 families there makes one thing clear: Whoever's in charge is as radical as the previous guys.

The regime's actions clash directly with President Trump's claim that the new mullahs are "very rational people," "not radicalized" like their predecessors in office.

No: It's a case of "meet the new boss, same as the old boss." Per one Iranian pastor, the move — which has roots in a US mission from the 19th century and has already involved significant persecution by the regime — came as a direct result of the US posture.

It's a continuation of the regime's appalling record on crackdowns against religious minorities in the country, which included the arrest of more than 300 Christians in 2024.

Here's the reality: There is *no new regime*. The same crew of anti-American fanatics — or like-minded lunatics who've replaced them — are clearly still in command. And ready to hurt the innocent and strike at the Great Satan and Little Satan whenever they can.

Need more proof? How about the recent call by Iran's Assembly of Experts demanding the death of "the wicked prime minister of the Zionist regime" and "the criminal American president" — a religious duty, they instructed, that must be carried out "under any circumstances." This is their idea of peace-making and "turning over a new leaf"?

Yet the church fiasco does even more to expose the regime than all the chest-beating — because officials who hold power in that case have *already* taken concrete action, confiscating property and pushing out residents.

Trump may think he can win a deal from Iran that America can live with. But make no mistake about Tehran's leadership.

The Dem Party's Ugly New Face

It's time to worry — *for real*: Democratic Socialist Melat Kiros' win in Colorado shows the anti-America, anti-Israel, antisemitic, anti-capitalism virus has spread well beyond Blue York.

On Tuesday, the Ethiopian-born Kiros — who's publicly defended anti-Israel protests, criticized *opponents* of antisemitism and said 9/11 and Oct. 7 were "inevitable" — unseated 15-term incumbent Democratic Rep. Diana DeGette.

And in the race for Michigan's open US Senate seat, the alarming frontrunner is Abdul El-Sayed, who campaigns with Hasan Piker — the radical nut who maintains that America "deserved" 9/11.

In New York, Darializa Aviles Chevalier won her primary fight despite having bragged of wiping her hands on the American flag. Zohran Mamdani, El-Sayed, Chevalier and Kiros are not anomalies; they're now the face of the Democratic Party. That's scary.

The Democratic Socialists of America and other insurgents have enjoyed numerous successful primary victories recently. Most horrifying, these insurgents actually earned extra points for their antisemitism. Indeed, DSA candidates have relentlessly echoed anti-Israel and pro-Hamas propaganda, making the Gaza war a wedge issue.

Yet instead of pushing back, the mainstream Democratic leadership is *welcoming* the newbies: House Minority Leader Rep. Hakeem Jeffries just extended an olive branch to them. Scatter-brained Kamala Harris reportedly reached out to Mamdani and others in her party's pro-Hamas wing in hopes of gaining support for her 2028 presidential run.

These "reasonable" Dems are playing with fire. The radicals are determined not just to wreck the economy with their socialist fantasies but to fuel antisemitism and erode American power. And they're coming for something establishment Dems care about even more: *themselves*.

Turning Kids Into Lifelong Criminals

Bronx District Attorney Darcel Clark just charged 19 reputed gang members on an assortment of crimes. And every one of these thugs, save the leader, was a *minor*.

Is there more compelling evidence that New York's Raise the Age law is a horrific failure?

The charges follow a 13-month long investigation into the "McKillville" gang's turf war with rivals, which featured shootings, conspiracies, assaults — and pure terror for the community. Prosecutors say the minors were 14- to 17-year-old boys who older men "urged" to "elevate themselves" by "committing attempted murders and assaults." Their alleged leader, 28-year-old gang leader Tyreik "Tubby" Seth, even told the kids to shoot rivals, "and they did so," added Clark.

It's a disturbing trend: During the six years after the passage of the Raise the Age law — which upped the age for criminal responsibility as an adult from 16 to 18 — the number of juvenile shooters spiked nearly *200%*.

The law meant minors would rarely face serious consequences, even for violent crimes, so gang bosses turned to them to do their dirty work. Innocent New Yorkers get caught in the crossfire.

Progressives, and most shamefully Gov. Hochul, stand by this system, thinking they're doing the kids a favor by saving them from paying a stiff price. Yet the kids instead learn that crime pays; many wind up embarking on long criminal careers that wreck their lives. Clark was right to slam the law. Indeed, the District Attorneys Association of New York has long urged the state to fix the law, after watching teens cycle through the system, re-offend and not be held accountable for even violent crimes.

"The youth justice system, quite frankly, is broken," fumed Clark. Unless it's fixed, kids will continue down a dark path, facing few consequences while the adult leaders remain free and the public remains terrified.

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letters@nypost.com

Supremes Ignored History In Their Citizenship Ruling

THE ISSUE: The Supreme Court's 6-3 ruling that struck down an executive order denying birthright citizenship.

John Roberts

- The cabal of liberals on the US Supreme Court — as well as the supposedly conservative Justices Amy Coney Barrett and John Roberts — chose politics over strict interpretation of the Constitution in the court's ruling on birthright citizenship ("Trump border battle defeat," July 1).

The 14th Amendment was written in plain English, and was meant to validate that former slaves and their descendants are American citizens. This is a sad day for America.

Ron Wasserman
Freehold, NJ

- What do you know: There are some things that the imperial president is not permitted to do, such as rewriting the Constitution.

The Supreme Court has appropriately affirmed that the 14th Amendment, which provides birthright citizenship, means what it says, and the president has no right to disavow it.

I imagine Trump has already vented his spleen by referring to the justices who ruled against him as "low-life scum" and "fools." That's how infantile people typically respond when they don't get their way. **Oren Spiegler**
Peters Township, Pa.

- The Supreme Court decision affirming birthright citizenship is the result of poor scholarship and ignorance of the historical facts of the 13th Amendment — created to correct the inequity of the Dred Scott decision — and the 14th Amendment, created to further clarify the intent of the 13th Amendment.

The current court's majority also ignored the contemporaneous writings of the legislatures stating their intent. The much discussed phrase of the 14th Amendment, "subject to the jurisdiction thereof," only needed the additional wording at the time to avoid the travesty of subsequent misinterpretation.

Edwin Ditlow
Richboro, Pa.

- Sometimes, I wonder whether law schools do enough to encourage their students to think outside the box. Take the latest Supreme Court ruling, which deems any child born on American soil a US citizen, for example. Where else in the world is this the case? A tourist arrives here, gives birth here, and that child is immediately regarded as a citizen even though the parents may not be. How does this make sense?

The 14th amendment was written with a specific group in mind — children of slaves. It is sad that our highest court's jurists cannot seem to grasp the law of the land.

Kenneth Chorzewski
New Rochelle

- The Supreme Court decision on unconditional birthright citizenship does not address the loophole in the 14th amendment that allows for intentional visa falsity or illegal entry to obtain citizenship.

This side door entry to obtain citizenship includes tourism birth, which is a teeming industry right here in Queens. Some women pay tens of thousands dollars for housing and natal care until they give birth.

The only pathway to correct this is amending the 14th Amendment. Until that happens, this abuse will continue.

Phil Serpico, Queens

- The 14th Amendment was issued by Congress after the Civil War to ensure emancipated slaves and their children were unequivocally acknowledged as citizens of the United States. While not the original intent, in the 158 years since then, it has been interpreted to mean that anyone born here is a citizen.

If America wants to squash the birthright tourism that drains immense resources from our collective budget, then a constitutional amendment is in order. In the meantime, enforce current immigration law.

Deirdre Harvey
Valley Stream

- It's been a rough couple of days for President Trump. Two of his biggest agenda items suffered major setbacks. First, his effort to restrict the counting of certain mail-in ballots was rejected by the Supreme Court. Second, his attempt, to end birthright citizenship, was for the most part turned down by the Supreme Court.

Since it's baseball season, this analogy comes to mind: I'm guessing there's little joy in The White House because Mighty Donald struck out twice with the bases loaded.

Denny Freidenrich
Laguna Beach, Calif.

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The New York Post is published by N.Y.P. Holdings Inc., 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036.
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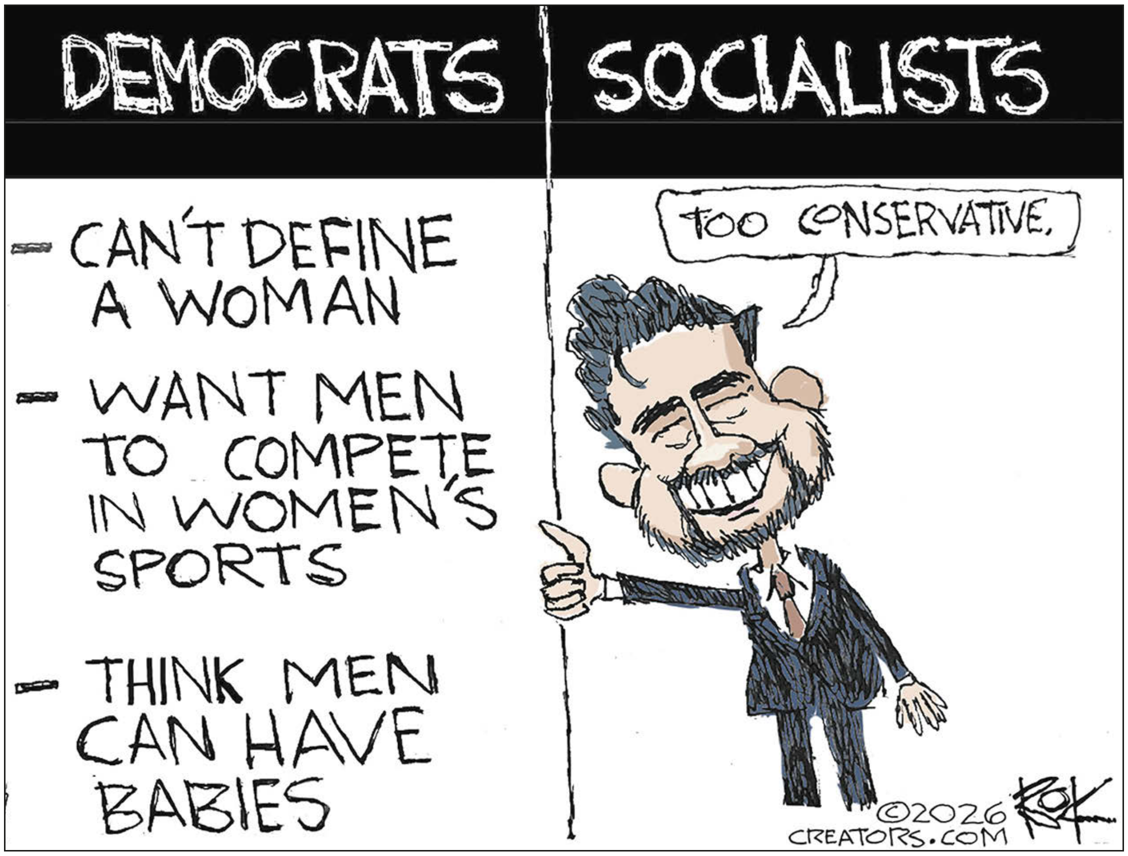

TARGET: 9/11 VICTIMS

MY mother Audrey Valentine, who spent her career as a detective with the NYPD, was one of the first responders who ran toward the towers on Sept. 11, 2001, while everyone else was running away.

She worked in the city morgue for weeks afterward, identifying the remains of victims. Some of those victims were her friends. Some were her colleagues.

She has carried the weight of that day for 25 years, in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder that never fully leaves. In prurigo nodularis, a chronic skin condition is tied to her exposure at Ground Zero, a permanent bodily reminder of where she stood that morning. In the memory of friends she will never see again.

She didn't deserve any of it. No American did. That shouldn't be controversial — but within the Democratic Party, it's increasingly treated as worth debating.

Take Abdul El-Sayed, the Democratic candidate for Michigan's open US Senate seat. He's campaigned alongside Hasan Piker, a media personality who says America "deserved" 9/11.

When pressed on it, El-Sayed didn't distance himself from Piker's reprehensible comments; he merely said they needed to be viewed "in context." Context, for the murder of nearly 3,000 people on American soil.

Or take Melat Kiros, the Democratic Socialists of America member and winner of this week's Democratic congressional primary in Colorado, who called both the 9/11 attacks and the Oct. 7 massacre in Israel "inevitable consequences" of American and Israeli foreign policy. Not tragedies, not atrocities — inevitabilities.

As if the men who flew planes into buildings full of office workers, and the terrorists who slaughtered families in their homes, were simply following a script written by us.

Even James Carville, lifelong Democratic strategist, called Kiros a "bridge too far" for his party. He's right. But the fact that a rising faction on Carville's own side requires such a public correction should alarm every Democrat who still believes in the country their party claims to represent.

HARRISON FIELDS

This burning hatred for America isn't a fringe internet phenomenon anymore. These are candidates for federal office, people who could soon hold a Senate or House seat, who are being defended and praised and funded by sitting officials. And they're getting a platform to suggest that American civilians had it coming.

My mother did not have it coming. Neither did the firefighters who climbed the stairs as the towers came down.

Neither did the office workers, the janitors, the Cantor Fitzgerald traders, the Windows on the World waitstaff or the passengers on four hijacked planes who tried to fight back. Neither did the Israeli families and concertgoers murdered and taken hostage on Oct. 7.

There's a meaningful difference between debating American foreign policy — which is fair game in this country and always has been — and excusing mass murder as a foreseeable and justified response to it. One is politics. The other is a moral collapse dressed up as nuance.

The Democratic Party has a choice to make. It can continue to let candidates like El-Sayed and Kiros carry its banner while explaining away language that excuses terrorism — or it can draw a clear line and say this evil has no home in the party of Roosevelt and Kennedy. So far, the response from party leadership has been meek.

I'm not asking Democrats to abandon their politics; I'm pleading with them to remember that some things sit outside of politics entirely. The murder of nearly 3,000 Americans on a Tuesday morning in September is one of them.

My mother's PTSD is not a talking point. Her dead friends are not debate props. Her scars, physical and otherwise, are not context for anyone's foreign-policy argument.

If the Democratic Party cannot say, clearly and without qualification, that the United States didn't deserve 9/11, it has a much bigger problem than messaging. And Americans must ask whether today's Democrats know what it means to stand with this country at all.

Harrison Fields served as principal deputy press secretary in the second Trump administration.

UN's Israel Hatred Boosts Leftists' Lies

A SMIRK laid bare the United Nations' unremitting hostility toward the state of Israel and its people. Last week UN Special Rapporteur Reem Alsalem sat stone-faced and silent as she reluctantly listened to wrenching testimony from Ilana Gritzewsky, a young Israeli woman abducted and viciously raped by Hamas during its Oct. 7 atrocities.

"Even now, the feeling of being violated and powerless still lingers," Gritzewsky said, her voice breaking. The Jordanian diplomat — whose mandate is to prevent "violence against women and girls" — let out an exasperated sigh in response.

Moments later, Gritzewsky pleaded with her: "Will you look at me?" And Alsalem finally did so, a smirk playing on her lips.

Her chilling cruelty can be interpreted in only two ways. Either she believes Gritzewsky was lying, in keeping with the rapporteur's claim last November that "no independent investigation found that rape took place on the 7th of October." Or she believes that Gritzewsky and the other Israeli women subjected to grotesque sexual violence and mutilation by those Hamas terrorists got what they deserved.

BEN COHEN

Whatever the answer, Alsalem's callous demeanor encapsulated the loathing with which UN appointees regard Israel, and their embrace of the wildest assertions made by Palestinian propagandists. Because the problem isn't Alsalem's alone: It is institutional and structural. And its impact is not limited to the UN, as the current surge of far-left anti-Zionists in US domestic politics demonstrates.

In the last month, the UN's human rights bureaucracy has stepped up its crusade to convict Israel of genocide. On June 16 Vanessa Frazier, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, placed the Israel Defense Forces on a blacklist of armed forces that abuse children.

UN blood libels are fueling the propaganda of pro-Hamas activists.

That list also includes the Russian Army and ISIS — but not Turkey, despite the horrors inflicted on the Kurds, including children, by its armed forces. Tellingly, none of the other state armed forces on that list were ever compelled, as the IDF was after Oct. 7, to engage in a war sparked by a massacre of their own civilians.

Then came the disgraceful June 23 report issued by the UN Human Rights Council's "Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory." Its press release made the report's purpose clear: It's meant to accuse Israel of "genocide and other atrocity crimes by deliberately targeting Palestinian children."

Under the 1948 Genocide Convention, intent must be proven if atrocities are to qualify as genocide. Yet despite running to nearly 100 pages, this report manifestly fails to do that.

Its key omission — likely a purposeful one — is any examination of how Hamas fought the Gaza war. After their Oct. 7 onslaught, the terrorists turned Gaza's civilian population into human shields.

They didn't wear uniforms, and they buried themselves among civilians. They used schools, hospitals and apartment buildings as terror bases.

None of these actions are even noted in the commission's report, let alone criticized. And while international law doesn't prohibit military action where civilians are present, the commission labeled every Israeli operation against Hamas as "genocidal" because civilians were in the vicinity. Its report depicts Israel as Nazi Germany reincarnated.

These UN blood libels are fueling the propaganda efforts of pro-Hamas activists around the world, including in the United States. The Democratic Socialists of America candidates who swept Democratic Party primaries last month promote them relentlessly.

So does New York City's DSA Mayor, Zohran Mamdani. So do far-right influencers with footholds in the Republican Party, like Tucker Carlson.

All of them want to turn Israel and its alleged "genocide" in Gaza into a wedge issue for American voters — and the UN is supplying their weapons. That's one reason why America's UN diplomats must continue pushing back.

The UN has created a sprawling infrastructure of committees, special commissions and special rapporteurs whose sole purpose is to portray Israel as the world's supreme rogue state. US taxpayers — the largest donors to the UN among all its member states — should not be subsidizing that insidious campaign.

Ben Cohen is a research fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

The Post Puzzle Page

SCRABBLE GRAMS

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A$_1$	E$_1$	O$_1$	V$_4$	P$_3$	R$_1$	P$_3$		RACK 1
A$_1$	I$_1$	I$_1$	O$_1$	D$_2$	M$_3$	N$_1$	3rd Letter Triple	RACK 2
A$_1$	O$_1$	X$_8$	B$_3$	S$_1$	H$_4$	C$_3$	Double Word Score	RACK 3
A$_1$	O$_1$	K$_5$	D$_2$	C$_3$	P$_3$	D$_2$		RACK 4

PAR SCORE 155-165
BEST SCORE 238

FOUR RACK TOTAL ____
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

TODAY'S ANSWER

SCRABBLE GRAMS

A$_1$	P$_3$	P$_3$	R$_1$	O$_1$	V$_4$	E$_1$	RACK 1 =	64
D$_2$	O$_1$	M$_3$	A$_1$	I$_1$	N$_1$		RACK 2 =	15
C$_3$	A$_1$	S$_1$	H$_4$	B$_3$	O$_1$	X$_8$	RACK 3 =	92
P$_3$	A$_1$	D$_2$	D$_2$	O$_1$	C$_3$	K$_5$	RACK 4 =	67
							TOTAL	238

SOLUTION
PAR SCORE 155-165

Directions: Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word using scoring directions at right. 7 Letter words get 50 point bonus. "Blank" used as any letter have no point value. All the words are in the Official SCRABBLE players Dictionary, 4th Edition.

POST SU DOKU

To solve a Su Doku, you must put a number from 1 to 9, in each empty box.

Each number must appear once in each horizontal row, as well as in each vertical column and in each of the 3-by-3 grids. Impossible? Not once you get the hang of it. Tips and in depth strategies at ***www.SudokuWiki.org***

Very Easy #7,328

	1	7			3	4	9	
6			8			1		
3				9				5
	7	2		6		5		
			4	7	8			
		4		2		8	3	
4				1				9
		6			7			1
	9	1	5			2	8	

Difficult #7,118

		6						
					9		7	
7			6		4	5	2	1
8	9		4	7	2			
				9				
			1	6	3		8	4
2	1	4	9		8			7
	8		3					
						1		

PLAY MORE GAMES!
NYPOST.COM/GAMES

Solutions on Page 40

© Syndicated Puzzles

Bridge

North dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH
♠ 10 9 7
♡ 10 9 6
◇ A Q 10 9 2
♣ 9 3

WEST
♠ A 3
♡ 8 7
◇ K 8 4 3
♣ K 10 8 4 2

EAST
♠ K J 8 6
♡ K 5
◇ J 6 5
♣ J 7 6 5

SOUTH
♠ Q 5 4 2
♡ A Q J 4 3 2
◇ 7
♣ A Q

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1♡	Pass
2♡	Pass	4♡	All Pass

Opening lead – ♠ A

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This week's deals have treated assumption by declarer and the defense: placing the cards so that the contract can be made or defeated.

Cover today's East-West cards. Against your four hearts, West leads the ace of spades. East signals with the eight, wins the next spade with the king and returns the jack. West ruffs your queen -- so far, so bad -- and leads a diamond. How do you play?

You will finesse in trumps, so for starters, assume East has the king. You can take the ace of diamonds, refusing a finesse, and let the ten of trumps ride. If it wins, you can lead a club to your queen next.

But ... assuming East has the king of clubs and king of hearts, he can't have the king of diamonds: That would give him an opening bid. Play the queen of diamonds at Trick Four, then finesse in trumps. You will be giving yourself a chance. To take the ace of diamonds and finesse in trumps, planning to finesse in clubs, can't be right.

Did you find the correct play?

Word Force

APPELLANT

From the word or phrase above, form **AT LEAST 13** five-letter words, without using more than one form of the same word. For example, drink or drank (not both).

ANSWERS IN TOMORROW'S POST

Yesterday's word:

MAIDENLY

ailed
aimed
alien
amend
anime
daily
delay
denim
dimly
eland
email
ideal
inlay
laden
lined
madly
maned
manly
mealy
medal
media
mined
named
yield

Wonderword

How to play: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **Circle their letters only. Do not circle the word.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

ARMS AKIMBO — Solution: 10 letters

C	O	N	F	I	D	E	N	T	L	A	I	C	O	S
F	O	C	U	S	S	O	B	O	S	B	M	I	L	U
A	C	M	A	X	A	L	E	R	U	P	E	O	A	P
S	H	U	M	O	D	E	L	S	P	T	R	U	N	E
H	E	S	E	U	E	E	I	O	A	T	E	T	G	R
I	S	C	U	S	N	N	S	T	N	B	Z	W	U	M
O	T	L	A	I	E	I	O	O	E	F	I	A	A	A
N	S	E	E	S	T	R	C	H	P	O	S	R	G	N
N	E	S	S	A	E	N	A	A	S	L	W	D	E	O
O	R	E	D	G	D	V	O	U	T	D	O	R	C	I
I	A	U	A	N	I	E	O	I	R	E	B	E	N	T
T	A	N	T	O	A	I	R	N	T	D	L	S	A	I
O	A	C	R	E	R	H	I	P	S	C	E	S	D	S
M	A	N	N	E	Q	U	I	N	Y	D	A	E	R	O
E	V	I	S	N	A	P	X	E	R	U	T	C	I	P

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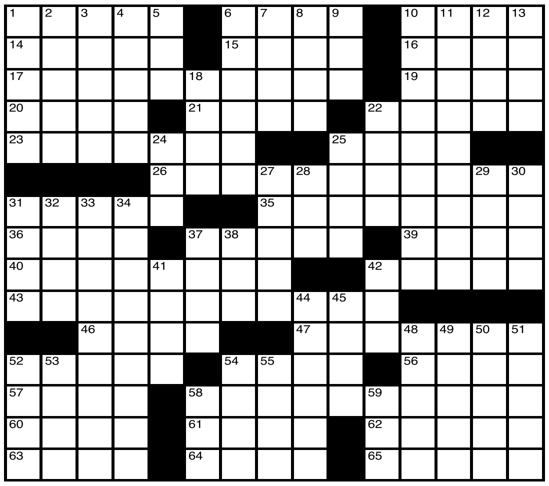
Action, Behavior, Boss, Business, Chest, Communicate, Confident, Control, Cues, Dance, Dress, Elbows, Emotion, Expansive, Fashion, Focus, Folded, Hands, Hips, Language, Leader, Limbs, Manager, Mannequin, Model, Muscles, Outward, Picture, Pose, Position, Ready, Relax, Rest, Rotate, Seat, Serious, Size, Social, Suit, Superman, Torso, Turn

Yesterday's Answer: The Giver

For **WONDERWORD** apps, books & more, visit Wonderword.com, or call 1-855-232-2367.

Quick Crossword



Across

1 Path behind a mower
6 Cheese in a Greek omelet
10 Whack with snowballs, say
14 Goosebump-causing
15 Person with a fan club
16 Cooking spread
17 Comfort that can only come from French bread?
19 Gradually introduce to solid foods
20 Isfahan's country
21 Claims that won't pass fact checks
22 Posh and __: nickname of a British celebrity couple
23 Mesopotamian empire that included parts of 20-Across
25 Likely to be mouthy
26 Creating perfect sunbathing conditions on an Italian beach?
31 Software demos
35 Capital of British Columbia
36 Employs
37 Spot
39 Staple that's often helpful in a pinch?
40 Chased
42 Bench press muscles
43 Positive review in a German newspaper?
46 Clairvoyant
47 Lost one's cool
52 Word with act or action
54 Political alliance
56 Conditional programming word
57 "Only Murders in the Building" home
58 Home for the king of Spain?
60 Salchow kin
61 Zealous
62 Asked too many questions, say
63 Unwelcome visitor
64 Funeral rite pile
65 Senators' staffers

Down

1 Instagram filter shade
2 Models
3 Met highlights
4 Lacking resonance
5 Gender-specific pronoun
6 Relating to offspring
7 Actress Falco
8 Wiggled body parts
9 ET from Melmac
10 Confidence-enabling stance
11 __ college
12 Security breach
13 Jillions
18 2025 Pixar title character
22 Muppet who lives in the basement of 123 Sesame Street
24 Blog feed letters
25 Senators target
27 Navratilova rival
28 Camera shot
29 Sandy sediment
30 Noshes
31 Nondescript town
32 Biblical twin
33 Events in retail parking lots
34 Thus
37 Elite athlete
38 Bench press muscle
41 Extra charges
42 Cold case sample
44 Tristan's beloved
45 Fairy tale start
48 __ dish
49 Flannel pattern
50 Name in the makeup aisle
51 Monopoly stack
52 Bloke
53 Quite posh
54 Quail group
55 Bear necessity?
58 Ice Spice genre
59 Ballston __, New York

R	I	F	F	■	A	N	Y	A	■	P	U	L	E	■
B	O	O	R	■	L	O	O	N	■	I	N	I	N	K
I	N	E	E	D	A	H	U	G	■	A	D	F	E	E
■	■	■	O	R	M	O	R	E	■	N	O	T	R	E
P	A	W	N	E	E	■	E	L	M	O	■	W	O	N
I	S	H	■	A	D	E	N	■	I	T	M	E	■	■
T	S	A	■	M	A	Y	O	■	D	E	S	I	G	N
A	E	T	N	A	■	E	T	A	■	A	G	G	R	O
S	T	A	I	R	S	■	S	P	E	C	■	H	E	R
■	■	R	A	G	U	■	E	T	C	H	■	T	A	M
P	T	A	■	U	B	E	R	■	H	E	I	S	T	S
S	I	C	E	M	■	M	I	L	E	R	S	■	■	■
A	N	K	L	E	■	C	O	A	L	S	T	O	V	E
S	T	E	I	N	■	E	U	R	O	■	O	W	I	E
■	S	T	A	T	■	E	S	P	N	■	O	N	E	L

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

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Dow Jones Indust. Avg. Up 594.83 52,900.07

Business

Nasdaq Comp. Down 207.36 25,832.67

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Pain easing

The average long-term mortgage rate fell this week to its lowest level since mid-May, easing borrowing costs for prospective homebuyers. The benchmark 30-year fixed rate mortgage rate slipped to 6.43% from 6.49% last week, Freddie Mac said Thursday.

Time to $ave

Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs said they are matching $1,000 contributions to Trump Accounts opened for their eligible employees' children. The accounts will launch on Saturday.

Investor faith

Withdrawal requests for Blue Owl Capital's biggest private credit funds slowed, soothing some jitters around the health of the private credit industry. Second-quarter redemption requests declined to $4.7 billion from $5.4 billion in the first quarter.

Bayer gambit

Bayer said it was consolidating its US Roundup business in a new unit, less than a week after scoring a major legal victory that blocked thousands of state-court lawsuits related to the weedkiller.

Oracle slump

Shares of software giant Oracle fell for the ninth straight day, their longest losing streak since December 2021.

Sources: Reuters, Dow Jones, AP

HIRING COOLDOWN

57K new June jobs end 3-month run above 100K

By TAYLOR HERZLICH

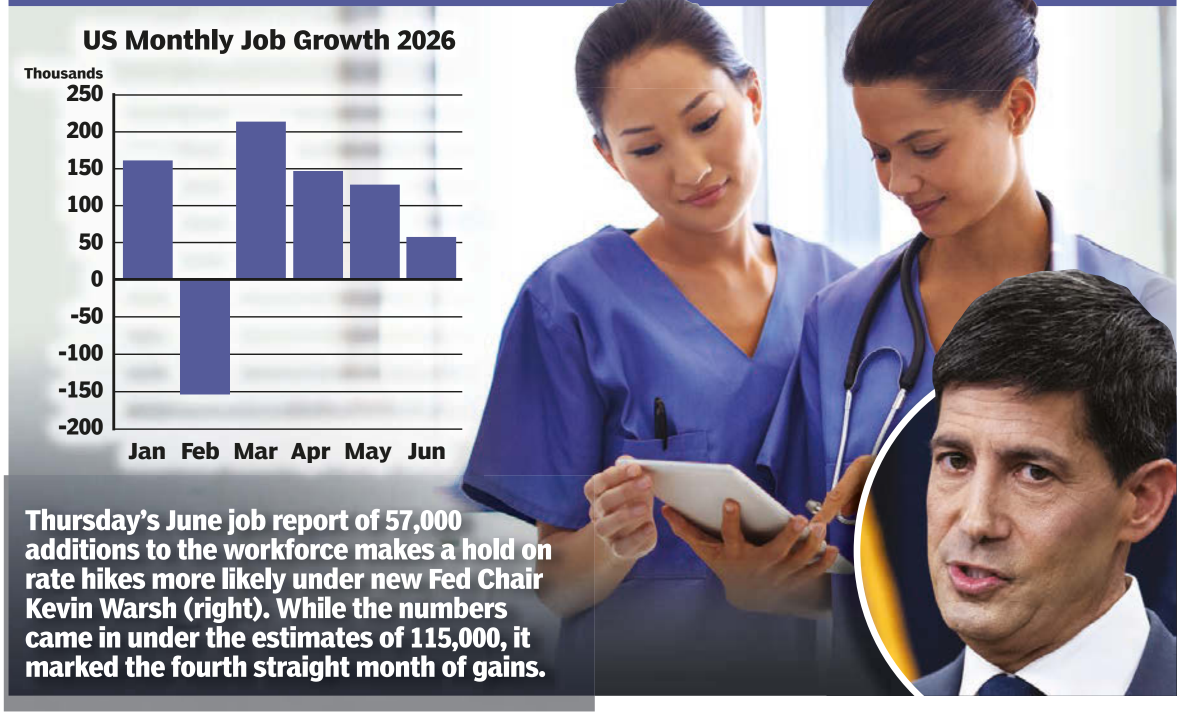
Hiring in June slowed from the torrid pace it saw in the spring, ending a three-month streak of job gains over 100,000 — and easing fears that the Fed will hike interest rates this month.

US employers added 57,000 jobs in June — about half of estimates of 115,000, though the figure marked the fourth straight month of gains, the Bureau of Labor Statistics said Thursday.

The unemployment rate eased to 4.2%, down slightly from 4.3% the previous month — signaling the labor market remains on steady footing even as the pace of hiring slowed.

Payrolls in April and May were also revised down by a combined 74,000.

Average hourly earnings, however, rose just 3.5% on an annual basis — turning negative when adjusted for inflation, which helps explain why consumer sentiment has plummeted.



Nice work

Thursday's June job report of 57,000 additions to the workforce makes a hold on rate hikes more likely under new Fed Chair Kevin Warsh (right). While the numbers came in under the estimates of 115,000, it marked the fourth straight month of gains.

Getty Images / Adobe Stock

Stocks mixed

After Fed Chair Kevin Warsh took a surprisingly strong anti-inflation stance at his first meeting as chairman last month, investors panicked that the Fed might hike interest rates — but Thursday's job numbers make a hold on rates more likely.

"Lately the narrative has been around inflation — which remains too high — but if the employment mandate is brought back into play, it can increase the odds of leaving rates on hold, which all things being equal would be much better for the market," Chris Zaccarelli, chief investment officer for Northlight Asset Management, said in a note Thursday.

Stocks were mixed, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average jumping nearly 600 points, or 1.1%, to a record close. The tech-heavy Nasdaq slumped 0.8%, and the S&P 500 was flat.

Traders priced in an 80% chance that the central bank will hold rates in the 3.5% to 3.75% range at their July 29 meeting — up about 10% from the previous day, according to CME FedWatch.

A strange blip in the jobs report came from the leisure and hospitality sector, which declined by 61,000 jobs — weaker than usual, as it typically sees a boost from seasonal hiring in the summer.

Analysts had expected an especially strong reading in hotels and food services from the World Cup, which Goldman Sachs estimated would contribute 40,000 jobs in the June report.

Jamie Cox, managing partner for Harris Financial Group, called the data "misleading," predicting "revisions higher in the next few months are coming."

Most of the job gains came from professional and business services, social assistance and healthcare — which have been trending higher over the past few months.

Professional and business services added 36,000 jobs while social assistance climbed by 25,000.

Healthcare, which has largely been driving employment gains, added 22,000 jobs in June — a slower pace than its average monthly gain of 38,000 over the past 12 months.

Manufacturing added 3,000 jobs in June for a gain of 18,000 so far this year, as the sector appears to be stabilizing after huge losses in 2024 and 2025.

However, the labor force shrunk by 720,000 people in June, mostly among prime-aged workers between 25 and 54 years old.

The share of people working or looking for work dropped to 83.3%, down from 83.9%.

Feds might get 5% ta$te of OpenAI

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman is reportedly floating a proposal to hand the US government a 5% stake in the ChatGPT developer as the company looks to cement ties with the Trump administration and blunt mounting political pressure over the explosive rise of artificial intelligence.

Altman has argued that giving the public a financial stake in one of Silicon Valley's most valuable AI companies would be the best way to share the economic benefits of the cutting-edge tech, the Financial Times reported.

The proposal carries an enormous potential price tag. Based on OpenAI's most recent private valuation of about $852 billion following its March fundraising, a 5% stake would be worth roughly $42.6 billion.

That figure could climb even higher if the company reaches its reported goal of a $1 trillion valuation in a planned initial public offering, which would value a 5% government stake at about $50 billion. The proposal would rank among the largest federal ownership positions ever in a private technology company.

OpenAI and the White House didn't respond to requests for comment.

Ariel Zilber

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Tesla recharges sales in Q2

Tesla on Thursday posted record-setting second-quarter delivery numbers that smashed past Wall Street estimates, led by a rebound in Europe, feeding hopes that in 2026 the electric-vehicle maker can end its two-year streak of annual declines.

Strong results from Tesla's mainstay auto business offer a crucial cushion as CEO Elon Musk (right) focuses on expensive ambitions in autonomous driving and artificial intelligence, the main drivers of the company's roughly $1.6 trillion valuation.

Shares of the Austin, Texas-based company slid 7.5% on Thursday. Analysts and investors said optimism had been priced in as the stock gained 12% earlier this week.

Tesla's recovery in Europe was aided by a surge in fuel prices, government EV incentives, faster electrification of corporate fleets, and easing of the consumer backlash over Musk's far-right politics last year.

Analysts said that the elimination of incentives for new EV purchases in the US last year continues to weigh on sales.

Tesla delivered 480,126 vehicles in the April-June period, a record for the second quarter and up about 25% from a year earlier, easily surpassing analysts' average estimate of 402,776 vehicles,. *Reuters*

Hamptons' dry Gen Z

Rethinking bottle service as kids cut booze

By JENNIFER GOULD

The forecast calls for a dry Fourth of July in the Hamptons, at least for young partygoers.

SIDE DISH

As in New York City and beyond, young people are shunning bottle service, with local proprietors scrambling to come up with suitable food and drink alternatives.

Bagatelle Restaurant Group CEO Aymeric Clemente has seen that first hand.

"Back in the day when we used to go out, it was about how many places we could go to in a night and how drunk we could get, but that time is gone," he told Side Dish.

"We still like to go out, but it's different and we take our time."

Sobering thought

Restaurants and clubs across the Hamptons are dealing with younger partygoers, like these at Montauk's Surf Lodge, who don't drink any alcohol or as much as visitors did in the past, leaving owners scrambling to adjust.

> **I don't know the last time I saw someone doing shots in the Hamptons.**
> — *restaurateur John Meadow*

BFA.com / BACKGRID

At LDV At The Maidstone in East Hampton and Barlume Beach in Montauk, both run by LDV Hospitality, tables run from $3,000 to $20,000 this weekend.

"I don't know the last time I saw someone doing shots in the Hamptons. It isn't the same dynamic as when I was a kid running around 25 years ago," said John Meadow, founder of LDV Hospitality.

To tempt guests into imbibing, Calissa in Water Mill has actually dropped its alcohol prices. The average price of a bottle now runs $650 to $850, down from $700 to $1,000, according to restaurateur James Mallios. Depending on the night, bottle service can run from $1,500 to $2,500 for six to 10 people.

While mocktails are available, too, Mallios has held off on giving them their own section on the menu.

"I'm not against mocktails, but I make a living selling food and beverage. That's how I pay my mortgage," he said. "I don't know if I want to play into the idea that alcohol in moderation is a bad thing."

Jayma Cardoso, the owner of Surf Lodge in Montauk, has also taken note of Gen Z's abstemious ways, saying, "Maybe they'll have one bottle of champagne, but the 27-year-olds just order fresh juices and zero-proof beer."

Surf Lodge charges up to $1,500 per person for table service.

"They're paying no matter what and I want to make sure they enjoy their experience," Cardoso said.

Zuck: No AI boost yet

Meta Chief Executive Mark Zuckerberg told an internal town hall on Thursday that AI agent development over the last four months had not "accelerated in the way we expected," according to a recording heard by Reuters.

Zuckerberg added that a company reorganization that included major job cuts was not as "clean" as it could have been and that the company's bets on the new structure "haven't come to fruition yet."

Meta is projected to spend as much as $145 billion on AI infrastructure this year, a significant portion of Big Tech's more than $700 billion outlay on the technology.

Zuckerberg said he expects that the social-media giant will begin to experience more significant benefits from its AI investments within the next three to six months. *Reuters*

JPM 'Javice $$' twist

JPMorgan Chase was ordered to keep paying convicted fraudster Charlie Javice's legal bills, with a Delaware judge rejecting the banking giant's bid to halt what it called "astronomical" defense costs that have now topped $70 million.

Delaware Chancery Court Magistrate Judge Christian Wright said in his ruling on Thursday that JPMorgan failed to meet its "challenging burden" of proving that Javice's legal fees were "so unmistakably unreasonable or clearly abusive" that they could only have resulted from bad faith.

The decision requires JPMorgan to continue advancing roughly $10.1 million in disputed legal fees incurred by Javice between January and September 2025.

JPMorgan said it disagreed with the decision and is considering its next steps. *Ariel Zilber*

Banking on Don nom woe

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, the top Democrat on the Senate Banking Committee, is calling out President Trump for nominating an exec from the same bank his family sued for alleged debanking, The Post has learned.

Brian Johnson, Capital One's vice president of compliance, has been getting grilled by Warren over his nomination to run the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. His candidacy comes after Trump's family sued Capital One for allegedly de-banking hundreds of Trump accounts.

Warren underscored those events in a Thursday letter to Eric Trump, asking him if his family plans to press ahead with its legal case.

"Given the Trump family's allegations against Capital One and the role the CFPB would play in addressing concerns about debanking, it would be helpful for the Committee to understand your views on Capital One," the far-left Massachusetts senator wrote Eric Trump, who runs The Trump Organization with brother Don Jr.

The Trump Organization and Capital One didn't respond to requests for comment.

Capital One has denied it shuttered Trump-linked accounts due to political discrimination.

Taylor Herzlich

Dispute on Korea $lap

South Korea's government on Thursday disputed a congressional report accusing Seoul of discriminating against Coupang, a US-based e-commerce giant that was hit with a record $410 million fine over a data breach affecting millions of South Korean customers.

The Post reported that Coupang was allegedly forced to carry out a bizarre plot to recover a stolen laptop from a river in China, which US officials claim is an example of Korea's anti-American tech regulations run amok. *Wires*

SUNDAR PICHAI
CEO takes a hit from EU.

Google loss on $4B slap

Google on Thursday lost its last bid to overturn a record-breaking $4.7 billion antitrust fine from the European Union, the latest blow as overseas regulators seek to crack down on Big Tech.

The EU's top court dismissed Google's appeal of a 2018 European Commission ruling accusing it of anticompetitive practices, specifically attacking its promotion of Google Search and Chrome on Android devices.

The ruling found Google, headed by CEO Sundar Pichai, abused its massive share of the smartphone market by making its apps pre-installed on Android devices.

"This judgment fails to recognize our significant investment to ensure Android remains open, interoperable and free," a Google rep said in a statement.

The fine is just one of several anticompetitive complaints the EU has lodged against Google over the past decade. *Taylor Herzlich*

Jersey Mike's going public

Sandwich chain Jersey Mike's filed for an IPO, pushing ahead with its plans to go public amid renewed enthusiasm for new listings.

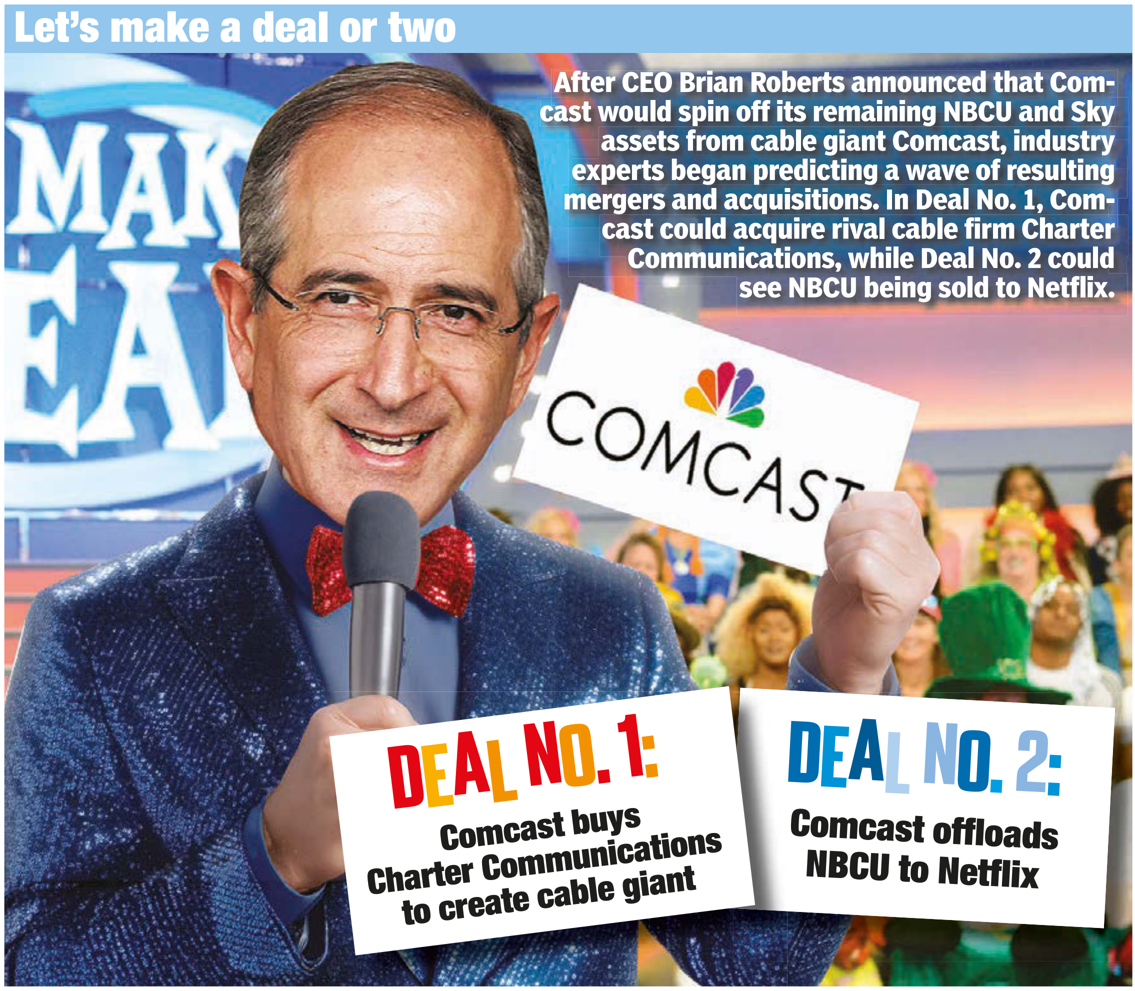
The company plans to list on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker JMKE.

Jersey Mike's filing revealed net income jumped to $55 million in its 2025 fiscal year, up from $5 million the year before, due to more royalties and lower founder-related discretionary expenses. *Wires*

A MERGING MARKET

On the money

CHARLES GASPARINO



Let's make a deal or two

After CEO Brian Roberts announced that Comcast would spin off its remaining NBCU and Sky assets from cable giant Comcast, industry experts began predicting a wave of resulting mergers and acquisitions. In Deal No. 1, Comcast could acquire rival cable firm Charter Communications, while Deal No. 2 could see NBCU being sold to Netflix.

COMCAST
DEAL NO. 1:
Comcast buys Charter Communications to create cable giant
DEAL NO. 2:
Comcast offloads NBCU to Netflix

NYPost Design

M&A blitz likely after Comcast/NBCU split

BRIAN Roberts' surprise plans to spin off NBCUniversal from Comcast have set the stage for an M&A bonanza, with bankers working overtime to concoct deals where the media mogul is both a buyer and a seller of some of the industry's biggest assets, On The Money has learned.

Just a few months ago when the battle for Warner Bros. Discovery was raging, the Comcast chief was considered an also-ran. Comcast's floundering stock price (down 55% over the past five years) was no match for **Ted Sarandos** at Netflix, or the deal's eventual winner, Paramount Skydance, backed by indie producer **David Ellison** and his mega billionaire father, **Larry Ellison**.

All of that changed this week when Roberts announced that Comcast is spinning off what's left of its news and entertainment assets in NBCU and Sky (recall, he already spun off cable assets like MS NOW and CNBC into a company called Versant) while keeping his cash cow, the Comcast cable business.

NBCU could be sold

Roberts will retain voting control of all three companies, and now finds himself in the catbird's seat, bankers and media executives tell On The Money. Common sense will tell you that having three separate and slimmed down companies makes it easier to buy stuff and to sell stuff; investors love the NBCU spinoff because distribution and content (the old Comcast business model) no longer appears to be a winning formula. Hence this week's pop in Comcast shares, which will be the currency Roberts might soon use for an acquisition.

Literally the minute the news hit the tape, one media M&A lawyer told me he thinks Roberts will add heft to Comcast's distribution business, which generates big bucks — albeit a lot less of them than it used to because of cord-cutting and encroachment from mobile carriers. Roberts will spin off NBCU at some point, he told me.

"I can see him buying Charter Communications and selling NBCU to Netflix," the veteran deal lawyer tells me.

The theory goes that Charter would bolster Comcast's cable business, and through Spectrum Mobile, the combined company can better compete with the Big 3 of wireless: Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile.

Netflix, meanwhile, has seen better days, which means it needs to do something. After losing the WBD bidding war, its stock recovered on the notion it doesn't have to spend tens of billions of dollars on a risky asset, only to begin another downward trajectory as investors now worry its content-focused model won't stand the test of time.

Bankers believe Sarandos will need NBCU to survive competition in streaming, along the lines of his proposed bet on WBD: A real studio, news, sports (which still generates big bucks) and entertainment (think "Saturday Night Live"), and the Peacock streaming service.

Philanthropic boost for skilled-trades training

The latest trend in corporate philanthropy signals that bosses and boards are finally retraining their focus on what the country actually needs — and it's a welcome shift away from the woke DEI agenda that has dominated for years.

In the past six months alone, Google, AT&T, Lowe's, Meta (the owner of Facebook and Instagram) and **Larry Fink**'s BlackRock announced they are pumping tens of millions of dollars into various programs to train people in the "skilled trades" — plumbers, mechanics, electricians, pipe fitters and iron workers.

To be sure, these corporate behemoths aren't shelling out all of this cash just to make the world a better place. AT&T says it needs blue-collar tradesmen to expand its high-speed fiber network to support AI build-out. Indeed, the need to support AI infrastructure is at the heart of the need for skilled laborers. AI still hasn't automated plumbing and iron work, and it might never.

These are also good-paying jobs — many of them in the six figures — that will be earned by people who need to save for retirement. So you can understand why BlackRock, a provider of retirement plans, might also be interested in this.

That said, it's nice to see big corporations backing something that's concrete and hard to argue with.

"The scale of growth underway in Texas demands a workforce ready to build it," Fink said.

Charles Gasparino

Classifieds

EMPLOYMENT

ENGINEERING

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NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

QUEENS COUNTY
NOTICE OF SALE

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF QUEENS
LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC,
-against-
PETER BAILEY, ET AL.
NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to a Final Judgment of Foreclosure entered in the Office of the Clerk of the County of Queens on May 27, 2025, wherein LAKEVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC is the Plaintiff and PETER BAILEY, ET AL. are the Defendant(s). I, the undersigned Referee, will sell at public auction at the QUEENS COUNTY SUPREME COURT, 88-11 SUTPHIN BLVD, COURTROOM 25, JAMAICA, NY 11435, on July 24, 2026 at 10:00AM, premises known as 12001 170TH STREET, JAMAICA, NY 11434; and the following tax map identification: 12387-117.
ALL THAT CERTAIN PLOT, PIECE OR PARCEL OF LAND, SITUATE, LYING AND BEING IN THE BOROUGH OF QUEENS, COUNTY OF QUEENS, CITY AND STATE OF NEW YORK

Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index No.: 717019/2022. Fearonce G. LaLande, Esq. - Referee. Robertson, Anschutz, Schneid, Crane & Partners, PLLC, 900 Merchants Concourse, Suite 310, Westbury, New York 11590, Attorneys for Plaintiff. All foreclosure sales will be conducted in accordance with Covid-19 guidelines including, but not limited to, social distancing and mask wearing. *LOCATION OF SALE SUBJECT TO CHANGE DAY OF IN ACCORDANCE WITH COURT/CLERK DIRECTIVES.

NASSAU COUNTY
PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DEVIATION FROM USCG REGULATIONS
EFFECTIVE FROM 21:15 ON JULY 10, 2026 THROUGH 22:45 ON JULY 10, 2026, (RAIN DATE: JULY 11, 2026) THE LONG BEACH BRIDGE WILL REMAIN IN THE CLOSED POSITION.

NOTICE OF SALE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE, that in accordance with applicable provisions of the Uniform Commercial Code as enacted in New York, by virtue of certain Event(s) of Default under that certain Ownership Interest Pledge and Security Agreement, dated as of September 30, 2022 (the "**Pledge Agreement**"), executed and delivered by OnBoard Hospitality Holdings LLC (the "**Pledgor**"), and in accordance with its rights as holder of the security, SBT Capital, LLC (the "**Secured Party**"), by virtue of that certain UCC-1 Filing Statement made in favor of Secured Party, and in accordance with Article 9 of the Uniform Commercial Code of the State of New York (the "**Code**"), Secured Party will offer for sale, at public auction, (i) Pledgor's 100% membership interest in and to OnBoard Hospitality LLC (the "**Pledged Entity**"), and (ii) certain related rights and property relating thereto (collectively, (i) and (ii) are the "**Collateral**"). Secured Party's understanding is that the principal assets of the Pledged Entity is that certain real property commonly known as 34-36 West 38th Street, New York, New York (the "**Property**") (collectively, the "**Property**"). Maltz Auctions ("**Maltz**"), under the direction of Richard B. Maltz or David A. Constantino (the "**Auctioneer**"), will conduct a public sale consisting of the Collateral (as set forth in Schedule A below), via online bidding, on **July 24, 2026 at 1:00pm**, in satisfaction of an indebtedness in the approximate amount of **$6,885,988.45**, including principal, interest on principal, and reasonable fees and costs, plus default interest through July 24, 2026, subject to open charges and all additional costs, fees and disbursements permitted by law. The Secured Party reserves the right to credit bid. Online bidding will be made available for pre-registered bidders via Maltz's online bidding App available for download in the App Store or on Google play and via desktop bidding at remotebidding.maltzauctions.com. **Bidder Qualification Deadline**: July 23, 2026 by 3:30 pm. Executed Terms & Conditions of Sale along with ten (10%) of Bidders intended bid amount (to be submitted via **wire transfer**) are required for consideration by any interested party and submitted directly to Maltz. Requests for wiring instructions should be sent to **rmaltz@maltzauctions.com.**

SCHEDULE A

Pledged Interest
PLEDGOR *ONBOARD HOSPITALITY HOLDINGS, LLC, a New York limited liability company*
ISSUER *ONBOARD HOSPITALITY LLC, a New York limited liability company*
INTERESTS PLEDGED *100% membership interest*

KRISS & FEUERSTEIN LLP
Attn: Michael J. Bonneville, Esq.
Attorneys for Secured Party
360 Lexington Avenue, Suite 1200
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LEGAL NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICE

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the New York State Urban Development Corporation, doing business as Empire State Development ("ESD" or the "Corporation"), pursuant to Section 16(2) of the New York State Urban Development Corporation Act (Chapter 174, Section 1, Laws of 1968, as amended) (the "Act"), has adopted a General Project Plan (the "Plan") with respect to the project listed below. Copies of the Plan(s) are available without charge to any person who shall make a request.

The Corporation will file such Plan(s) in the office of the County Clerk of each Project location. A copy of the Plan is also on file at the principal office of the Corporation, 655 Third Avenue, New York, New York 10017, and is available for inspection by request. Send email requests to: Landgprojectcomments@esd.ny.gov Subject: Plan – New Museum of Contemporary Art Expansion Tourism NEW INC Capital & New Museum of Contemporary Art Expansion – Regional Council Capital Fund and Market NY Capital Appropriation (Capital Grants). Information regarding the Project is also provided below with the project listing.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE, that, a virtual public hearing to consider the Plan(s), open to all persons, will be held remotely by the Corporation on Friday, July 17, 2026, from 2:00pm to 3:00pm utilizing the Zoom video communications and teleconferencing platform. Detailed instructions for participation in the virtual hearing can be viewed at https://esd.ny.gov/esd-media-center/public-notices. Additionally, the public is given an opportunity to comment on the Project(s) by submitting comments electronically to Landgprojectcomments@esd.ny.gov Subject: Comment – New Museum of Contemporary Art Expansion Tourism NEW INC Capital & New Museum of Contemporary Art Expansion – Regional Council Capital Fund and Market NY Capital Appropriation (Capital Grants) by 5:30pm on Friday, July 17, 2026.

New Museum of Contemporary Art Expansion Tourism NEW INC Capital & New Museum of Contemporary Art Expansion – Regional Council Capital Fund and Market NY Capital Appropriation (Capital Grants) – New York (New York City Region – New York County). The Project includes involves the renovation and expansion of the existing museum located at 231 Bowery Drive in New York City. Total Project cost is expected to be approximately $ 87,876,193. ESD proposes to make two grants totaling up to $3,170,000 to New Museum of Contemporary Art to assist in the financing of the Project. There are no jobs associated with the Project.

DATED: **Friday, July 3, 2026**
New York, New York
By: Deborah Royce

New York State Urban
Development Corporation
Corporate Secretary

NOTICE OF SALE

SUPREME COURT COUNTY OF QUEENS BAYVIEW LOAN SERVICING, LLC, Plaintiff AGAINST JUAN CRUZ; ET AL., Defendant(s) Pursuant to a Judgment of Foreclosure and Sale duly entered October 26, 2017, I, the undersigned Referee will sell at public auction at the Queens County Supreme Courthouse, on the second floor in Courtroom 25, 88-11 Sutphin Boulevard, Jamaica, New York on July 10, 2026 at 10:00 AM, premises known as 102-02 39th Avenue, Corona, NY 11368. All that certain plot piece or parcel of land, with the buildings and improvements erected, situate, lying and being in the former Town of Newtown, County of Queens, City and State of New York, Block: 1770 Lot: 26. Approximate amount of judgment $709,852.02 plus interest and costs. Premises will be sold subject to provisions of filed Judgment Index #725411/2021. For sale information, please visit Auction.com at www.Auction.com or call (800) 280-2832. Lawrence M. Litwack, Esq., Referee Fein, Such & Crane, LLP 28 East Main Street Rochester, NY 14614 AYSNC295 90024

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NEW YORK POST

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NEW YORK POST

New York City Department of Transportation
Notice of Public Hearing

The New York City Department of Transportation will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday July 22, 2026 at 11:00 A.M. The hearing will be held remotely on the following petitions for revocable consent.

#1 10E75th LLC – To continue to maintain & use a fenced-in area on the south sidewalk of E 75th St between Fifth and Madison Aves, in the Borough of Manhattan.
#2 18 Gramercy Park Condominium - to continue to maintain & use four (4) planters on the south sidewalk of Gramercy Park South, west of Irving Pl. & five (5) planters on the west sidewalk of Irving Pl., between E 19th St. & Gramercy Park South, in the Borough of Manhattan.
#3 45 Fifth Avenue Apt. Corp.- to continue to maintain & use two fenced-in planted areas on the east sidewalk of Fifth Ave north of E 11th St, in the Borough of Manhattan.
#4 David H. Storper and Tina Storper - to continue to maintain & use a fenced-in area on the south sidewalk of E 70th St, west of Lexington Ave, in the Borough of Manhattan.
#5 James D. Kuhn & Marjorie P. Kuhn - to continue to maintain & use a fenced-in area together with planters & an electric snowmelt system on the south sidewalk of E 73rd St, west of Lexington Ave, in the Borough of Manhattan.
#6 The Milan Associates L.P. – to continue to maintain & use a fenced-in area on the south sidewalk of W 69th St, west of Central Park West, in the Borough of Manhattan.
#7 Three Dogs LLC – to continue to maintain & use a fenced-in planted area on the east sidewalk of Fifth Ave, north of E 94th St, in the Borough of Manhattan.
#8 West 112th Street – to continue to maintain & use a planted area on the south sidewalk of West 112th St between St. Nicholas Ave and Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd., in the Borough of Manhattan.
#9 Y & A Realty LLC – to continue to maintain & use a stoop, steps & a fenced-in area on the south sidewalk of W 87th St, west of Columbus Ave, in the Borough of Manhattan.
#10 146 Willow LLC – to continue to maintain & use a stoop & a fenced-in area together with stairs on the west sidewalk of Willow St between Pierrepont and Clark Sts, in the Borough of Brooklyn.
#11 277 State LLC – to continue to maintain & use a stoop, stairs & a planted area on the north sidewalk of State St, east of Smith St, in the Borough of Brooklyn.
#12 Charles M. Royce Jr. – to continue to maintain & use a fenced-in area & stoop on the west sidewalk of Clermont Ave, north of Greene Ave, in the Borough of Brooklyn
#13 Gregory E. Bylinsky & Mae H. Hsieh – to continue to maintain & use a fenced-in area and stoop on the west sidewalk of Cheever Pl, north of DeGraw St, in the Borough of Brooklyn.
#14 Ravenswood Operations LLC – to continue to maintain & use a tunnel under & across 36th Ave west of Vernon Blvd., in the Borough of Queens.
#15 Ravenswood Operations LLC – to continue to maintain & use conduits under & across 36th Ave, west of Vernon Blvd., in the Borough of Queens.
#16 James Ducey & Judith Ducey – to continue to maintain & use a fenced-in area on the north sidewalk of Wakefield Rd., east of Woods of Arden Rd, in the Borough of Staten Island.

Interested parties can obtain copies of proposed agreements or request sign-language interpreters (with at least seven days prior notice) by writing revocableconsents@dot.nyc.gov or by calling (212) 839-6550.

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NEW YORK POST ACTION

Post Time: **1:10 p.m.**
vcangialosi@nypost.com

Saratoga

Analysis by Vic Cangialosi

Lock of the Day **Mo For The King (3rd)**

1 — 1 1/8 miles; $120,000; alw; 3up

And they're off at steamy Saratoga! In the opener **PRETTY BOY MIAH** was last of 14 behind Napoleon Solo in the longer Preakness. Winner previous pair. Rebound chance. **FACT** won by a neck before shipping from Indiana. Prat picks up the mount. Board hitter 6 of 7. **CHILLAX** led, faded to be 3rd at Churchill. Tightens, but 0 for 4 at this shorter distance. Jacobson gets Gaffalione back. **COPIOUS** stretched to 9 furlongs and graduated on his 7th start. Competitively spotted.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Nogradi(L),126	M Chuan	1-3-1	Brion	5-1
2	McAfee(L),126	J Velazquez	6-4-2	Weaver	9-2
3	Chillax(L),126	T Gaffalione	3-6-6	Jacobson	8-1
4	Fact(L),126	F Prat	1-4-2	Walden	5-2
5	Pretty Boy Miah(L),121	R Santana, Jr	14-1-1	Englehart	6-1
6	Founders(L),126	M Franco	2-2-6	Joseph	3-1
7	Copious(L),126	J Ortiz	1-3-4	Rice	6-1

2 — 5 1/2 fur(T); $115,000; mdn; 2YO(f)

Two-year-olds on the turf to backend the double. Going with the debuting **ROCKABYE**. Franco rides the Flightline filly for Clement. **TIMBERTOP** has a race under her. Distant 3rd as fave in the slop. Makes grass debut for Ward who takes blinkers off. Three more debuters. **ALLURA** (Danner/Gaffalione/Mind Control), **CHARLOTTES BEACH** (Casse/J Ortiz/Not This Time) and **PAVLOVAS PALACE** (Mott/Alvarado/Palace Pier).

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Greatest Joy,123	J Lezcano	x-x-x	Rice	8-1
2	Space for Grace,123	P Lopez	x-x-x	Dini	12-1
3	Charlotte's Beach,123	J Ortiz	x-x-x	Casse	7-2
4	Girls Wear Pearls,123	F Prat	x-x-x	Antonucci	9-2
5	Timbertop,123	J Velazquez	3-x-x	Ward	3-1
6	Pavlova's Palace(GB),123	J Alvarado	x-x-x	Mott	8-1
7	Allura,123	T Gaffalione	x-x-x	Danner	12-1
8	Bourbon Madness,123	D Davis	x-x-x	Hennig	20-1
9	Rockabye,123	M Franco	x-x-x	Clement	4-1

3 — 6 fur; $105,000; alw; 3up

These 3 hooked up at the Spa during the Belmont Stakes Festival. Falcone's **MO FOR THE KING** was 3rd, Rice's **ANYWAY** was 2nd and Maker's **FIREBALLIN** was 6th. Mo for the King won by 9+ lengths at this shorter distance under Prat at Aqueduct. So did Anyway, by 2 lengths. **BLUE ROOF BEAU** debuted with a W this distance. Beats top 3 to the lead but can he hold on?

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Mo for the King(L),126	F Prat	3-6-1	Falcone	8-5
2	Liberty Rising(L),126	O Hrndz Mreno	6-5-4	Quick	30-1
3	Anyway(L),122	M Franco	2-1-2	Rice	5-2
4	Fireballin(L),126	T Gaffalione	6-2-3	Maker	5-1
5	Blue Roof Beau(L),122	J Lezcano	1-x-x	Englehart	4-1
6	B Provocateur(L),122	R Santana, Jr	6-4-1	Rodriguez	15-1
7	The Toy Cannon(L),122	J Rodriguez	1-4-4	Dixon	6-1

4 — 7 fur; $41,000; mdn clm($20,000); 3up

Taking **PRIVATE FLIGHT** who flew home 2nd best with comparable company last pair. Moves forward. **MR RT** led, lost by a 1/2 length. Retreats, but 0 for 3 racing 7 furlongs. Prat a good sign. **BELLAMY** reported home 3rd, 4th then 6th this distance. Offers exotics value. Santana on..blinkers on.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	RumblyoungmanrumblL,122	J Castellano	5-7-4	Donk	10-1
2	Trail Blaze(L),122	J Ortiz	3-6-2	Rice	9-2
3	Private Flight(L),126	J Lezcano	2-2-7	Hennig	5-2
4	Bellamy(L),122	R Santana, Jr	6-4-3	Legall	15-1
5	Ryan's Shadow(L),126	M Franco	7-7-2	Cox	4-1
6	Big Brooklyn(L),122	R Gutierrez	5-8-3	C Martin	15-1
7	Mr R T(L),126	F Prat	2-5-5	Jimenez	7-2
8	Restless Renegade(L),126	R Silvera	6-2-3	Rice	6-1
9	United Steins(L),122	O Hrndz Mreno	x-x-x	Potts	30-1

5 — 5 1/2 fur(T); $120,000; alw; 3up(f)

Tom Morley tried **PAULAS A STAR** on the grass here in June and she ran well, 2 lengths shy. Paulas a Star, 2nd time on the turf. **MINUTE BY MINUTE** (Brown) and **KILBY GIRL** (Ward) make turf debut after going 1 for 2 on dirt. Davis on Kentucky invader Kirby Girl. **ONE LAST KNOCK** is the only 2-time turf winner in the field.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Minute by Minute(L),122	F Prat	7-1-x	C Brown	7-2
2	Next On Stage(L),126	M Franco	3-1-2	Rice	6-1
3	Paula's a Star(L),126	R Santana, Jr	4-2-5	Morley	4-1
4	Ratu Jawa(L),126	C Gonzalez	5-4-1	Seyler	15-1
5	Oscar Bound(L),122	S Bridgmohan	6-6-6	Giddings	20-1
6	One Last Knock(L),126	J Rodriguez	1-2-2	Brion	6-1
7	Oscar's Encore(M),122	J Ortiz	9-6-1	Sharp	5-1
8	Kilby Girl(L),122	D Davis	1-7-x	Ward	8-1
9	One More Guitar(L),122	J Lezcano	6-1-3	Proctor	9-2

6 — 1 1/8m; $37,000; clm($12,500); 4up

Evenly for 4th last out, **SHIPSATIONAL** stretches to distance he missed by a neck at, previous start. **METATRONS MUSE** moved lower and won a photo finish. Has not performed well at this longer distance. J Ortiz rides for Noda. **PETROLO** was 3rd behind Shipsational racing off the layoff. Scored, same distance prior to the break. Rider change to Franco. **CATCH THE SMOKE** won comfortably racing for 11k at Finger Lakes. Outrun all 3 starts at Saratoga.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Polar Bear Plunge(L),123	R Santana, Jr	5-5-6	Kantarmaci	5-1
2	Catch the Smoke(L),123	R Gutierrez	1-4-4	Falcone	8-1
3	Prove Worthy(L),121	E Zayas	3-7-1	Morey	7-2
4	Metatron's Muse(L),123	J Ortiz	1-5-5	Noda	5-2
5	Shipsational(L),121	S Gonzalez	4-2-3	Kantarmaci	9-2
6	Petrolo(L),121	M Franco	3-1-3	James Bond	6-1
7	Laughing Boy(L),121	R Silvera	4-8-4	Simmonds	20-1
8	First Trumpet(L),123	J Rodriguez	6-7-3	Giangiulio	8-1

7 — 7 fur; $120,000; alw; 3up

SILVER TALENT won at 2nd asking for Chad Brown. Well spotted for repeat. **BELGIAN** debuted with a W at Saratoga last summer, then 3 lengths short in a Grade 3 on grass. Moves lower to make 3YO debut for Weaver. **HIT THE POST** is 2 for 4 at the Spa after winning by 9+ lengths last month. Bridgmohan rides the contender for Giddings. **MAGNANIMOUS MAX** has won 3 in a row, latest by a length at the Springs. Did not perform well, lone start at this shorter distance. **WHITE SMOKE RISING** Like top pick he won at 2nd asking and can repeat.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Silver Talent(L),122	F Prat	1-5-x	C Brown	7-2
2	Belgian(L),122	J Castellano	5-1-x	Weaver	3-1
3	Hit the Post(L),126	S Bridgmohan	1-3-8	Giddings	7-2
4	Private Desire(L),126	J Rodriguez	5-2-7	Morley	15-1
5	Fort Nelson(L),126	J Ortiz	5-1-1	Rice	6-1
6	Magnanimous Max(L),126	M Franco	1-1-1	Rice	4-1
7	White Smoke Rising(L),122	J Velazquez	1-2-x	Baker	9-2

8 — 1 mile(T); $150,000; Wild Applause; 3YO(f)

The first stake of the meet is the Wild Applause. Motts' **PILLAR OF BEAUTY** rallied to win here in June at 27-1. Has never raced this far but she may relish the trip. Alvarado gets a pace to chase. **SMEXY** was 3rd, a length short in the Penn Oaks mile. **LOVELY GREY** finished up the track in the Kentucky Oaks. Back to the grass where she is 1 for 3. The W earned at 1 1/16 miles. **I LOVE GIRAFFES** edged an allowance field at Laurel, same distance. **CANDY MOONSHINE** led, settled for 3rd in the Chelsey Flower last November. May need a race.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Scratch It,122	M Franco	1-7-2	Cox	12-1
2	Paris Carver,120	J Castellano	1-3-x	Delgado	12-1
3	Alone Time,120	J Velazquez	10-8-1	DeVaux	20-1
4	Candy Moonshine,120	J Rodriguez	3-1-3	Gorham	15-1
5	Faye's Gold,122	R Santana, Jr	10-1-2	Forster	20-1
6	Smexy(IRE),120	T Gaffalione	3-5-x	Walsh	7-2
7	To a Flame,122	J Ortiz	11-7-1	Arnold II	9-2
8	Lovely Grey,120	D Davis	12-2-2	Danner	4-1
9	I Love Giraffes,122	P Lopez	1-7-1	Summers	6-1
10	Code,120	F Prat	2-1-4	Hampson	5-1
11	Pillar of Beauty,122	J Alvarado	1-7-2	Mott	8-1

9 — 6 fur; $200,000; Schuylerville; 2YO(f)

Two-year-old fillies seek a stake win in the Schuylerville. Jena Antonucci's **LUMINOUS BEAUTY** is the one to catch after winning by a 1/2 dozen at Saratoga last month. **VOYAGER** is 0 for 1 but finished well for 2nd racing shorter at Churchill. J Ortiz picks her up for Casse. **PRIME AURORA** (Gulfstream), **WASHTON** (Churchilll) and **MADELEINE SWANN** (Monmouth) move to the stake off debut Ws. Johnny V on Prime Aurora.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Voyager,120	J Ortiz	2-x-x	Casse	7-2
2	Prime Aurora,122	J Velazquez	1-x-x	Gardea	9-2
3	Pot's Right,122	R Santana, Jr	4-1-x	Antonacci	12-1
4	Madeleine Swann,122	J Castellano	1-x-x	Delgado	8-1
5	Washton,122	T Gaffalione	1-x-x	Asmussen	4-1
6	Harper's Corner,122	P Lopez	1-x-x	Lynch	6-1
7	Costa Linda,122	X Perez	1-x-x	Robb	10-1
8	Luminous Beauty,122	F Prat	1-2-x	Antonucci	3-1

10 — 1 1/16 miles(T); $150,000; Saranac; 3YO

GLAVINE graduated at the Big A, then 1 1/2 lengths short in the Grade 3 Pennine Ridge here in June. Rebounds for Morley, same distance in the Saranac. **ARIZONA TERRITORY** makes stake debut after winning twice at this distance for Chad Brown. **HEEERES JOHNNY** Maiden is 0 or 6 on turf but runnerup all 4 starts at this distance. Best value. **GO GREY** is 2 for 2 on grass but will have a hard time keeping up his record clean today. Lopez on the Delaware shipper. **SIYOUINCANADA** loads off a wire-to-wire debut W at Churchill. J Ortiz will have him forwardly placed for Joe Sharp.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Siyouincanada(FR),120	J Ortiz	1-x-x	Sharp	9-2
2	Heeere's Johnny,120	D Davis	5-2-5	Handal	20-1
3	Go Grey,122	P Lopez	1-1-6	Trombetta	12-1
4	Teddy's Rocket,120	M Franco	4-4-1	Clement	8-1
5	Tiz Trouble,120	J Alvarado	1-x-x	Lewis	20-1
6	My Favorite Bird,120	T Gaffalione	8-2-2	Sweezey	20-1
7	Glavine,120	J Velazquez	4-1-2	Morley	4-1
8	Print,120	R Santana, Jr	3-2-1	Ribaudo	20-1
9	Blinging It Back,120	E Zayas	7-5-3	Casse	12-1
10	Zeppelin,120	J Lezcano	3-8-3	Arnold II	10-1
11	Arizona Territory,122	F Prat	1-1-5	C Brown	5-2
12	A Little At First,122	J Castellano	1-5-1	De Paz	15-1
13	Gulfy,122	R Santana, Jr	4-1-1	Rodriguez	3-1

11 — 1 1/16 miles(T); $78,000; alw; 3up(f)

Johnny V sweeps the late double with **SALT PRINCESS**. Lunged at the start and never factored last out. Winner 2 of previous 3 at this distance. **DIVIDEND RECAP** was a close 4th after a troubled trip. Winner previous start and here last summer. Franco rides for Clement. **BROKEALLTHERULES** won last 2 grass starts by a neck. Never raced this far. **RIVER TAY** was 2nd and **PRETTY LAVISH** was 3rd in front of the compromised Dividend Recap.

PN	Horse Wt.	Jockey	Last 3	Trainer	Odds
1	Yau Majesty(L),121	R Santana, Jr	5-2-3	Gorham	30-1
2	Spying(L),126	T Gaffalione	4-5-1	Walsh	10-1
3	Salt Princess(L),121	J Velazquez	6-4-1	Donk	8-1
4	Lotus Petal(L),126	E Zayas	7-1-5	Antonucci	20-1
5	Dividend Recap(L),126	M Franco	4-1-2	Clement	2-1
6	Pretty Lavish(IRE)(L),126	J Rodriguez	3-7-6	Green	4-1
7	Lady River Lily(L),126	C Gonzalez	12-6-2	Seyler	30-1
8	Bobby Jean(L),126	J Alvarado	8-6-7	Hennig	15-1
9	River Tay(IRE)(L),126	D Davis	2-1-1	B Brown	6-1
10	Brokealltherules(L),126	F Prat	1-4-1	R Dutrow	7-2
11	Adrian(L),126	F Prat	4-3-4	Rice	5-2
12	That's Funny(L),126	M Franco	4-7-1	Kantarmaci	6-1

PLAY OF THE DAY

And away we go. Three plays on Day 1 of 46 at Saratoga. Bet $30 to win on Mo for the King in Race 3 and $4 across the board on Pillar of Beauty in Race 8 and Salt Princess in Race 11. — *Vic Cangialosi*

Golf

PGA Tour- John Deere Classic
At TPC Deere Run; Silvis, Ill.; Purse: $8.8 million; Yardage: 7,327; Par: 71
First Round

Zac Blair	30-33	63	-8
Lucas Glover	30-33	63	-8
Lee Hodges	33-31	64	-7
Stephan Jaeger	31-33	64	-7
Zach Johnson	33-31	64	-7
Patrick Fishburn	32-33	65	-6
Ben Kohles	33-32	65	-6
Davis Riley	35-30	65	-6
Michael Brennan	32-34	66	-5
Rafael Campos	34-32	66	-5
Joel Dahmen	32-34	66	-5
Tyler Duncan	32-34	66	-5
Chris Gotterup	32-34	66	-5
Troy Merritt	33-33	66	-5
William Mouw	35-31	66	-5
Austin Smotherman	32-34	66	-5
Hayden Springer	32-34	66	-5
Preston Stout	34-32	66	-5
Aaron Wise	35-31	66	-5
Kevin Yu	33-33	66	-5
Jacob Bridgeman	33-34	67	-4
Zecheng Dou	33-34	67	-4
Nick Dunlap	33-34	67	-4
A.J. Ewart	32-35	67	-4
Lanto Griffin	34-33	67	-4
Luke Gutschewski	31-36	67	-4
Harry Higgs	34-33	67	-4
Ryo Hisatsune	32-35	67	-4
Max Homa	32-35	67	-4
Tom Kim	33-34	67	-4
Hao-Tong Li	31-36	67	-4
David Lipsky	33-34	67	-4
Mac Meissner	35-32	67	-4
Andrew Putnam	33-34	67	-4
Gordon Sargent	33-34	67	-4
Matt Wallace	32-35	67	-4
Daniel Berger	34-34	68	-3
Christiaan Bezuidenhout	34-34	68	-3
Ryan Brehm	33-35	68	-3
Steven Fisk	33-35	68	-3
Noah Goodwin	32-36	68	-3
Kensei Hirata	33-35	68	-3
Rico Hoey	34-34	68	-3
Sungjae Im	34-34	68	-3
Chan Kim	33-35	68	-3
Pontus Nyholm	33-35	68	-3
Taylor Pendrith	33-35	68	-3
J.T. Poston	34-34	68	-3
Jackson Suber	33-35	68	-3
Michael Thorbjornsen	32-36	68	-3
Ryan Voois	34-34	68	-3
Zachary Bauchou	35-34	69	-2
Blades Brown	34-35	69	-2
Jonathan Byrd	34-35	69	-2
Davis Chatfield	36-33	69	-2
Luke Clanton	36-33	69	-2
Pierceson Coody	35-34	69	-2
Trace Crowe	32-37	69	-2
Michael Feagles	33-36	69	-2
Doug Ghim	34-35	69	-2
Ben Griffin	31-38	69	-2
Nicholas Lindheim	36-33	69	-2
Chandler Phillips	36-33	69	-2
Kevin Roy	37-32	69	-2
Davis Thompson	34-35	69	-2
Kris Ventura	34-35	69	-2

Champions Tour- U.S. Senior Open Championship
At Scioto County Club; Columbus, Ohio; Purse: $4 million; Yardage: 7,170; Par: 70
First Round

Stewart Cink	37-30	67	-3
Charlie Wi	33-34	67	-3
Simon Griffiths	35-33	68	-2
Fredrik Jacobson	35-33	68	-2
George McNeill	33-35	68	-2
Alex Cejka	34-35	69	-1
Greg Chalmers	36-33	69	-1
Ben Crane	34-35	69	-1
Jamie Donaldson	34-35	69	-1
Tommy Gainey	33-36	69	-1
Richard Green	35-34	69	-1
Padraig Harrington	34-35	69	-1
Miguel Angel Jimenez	36-33	69	-1
Soren Kjeldsen	32-37	69	-1
Paul Stankowski	37-32	69	-1
Stephen Ames	32-38	70	E
Chris Devlin	33-37	70	E
Darren Fichardt	34-36	70	E
Retief Goosen	34-36	70	E
Justin Hicks	36-34	70	E
Colin Montgomerie	36-34	70	E
Tim Petrovic	35-35	70	E
Ian Poulter	36-34	70	E
Omar Uresti	36-34	70	E
Michael Wright	33-37	70	E

DP World Tour- BMW International Open
At Golfclub Munchen Eichenried; Munich; Purse: $3 million; Yardage: 7,354; Par: 72
First Round

Hennie Du Plessis,	31-33	64	-8
Jayden Trey Schaper,	33-31	64	-8
Anthony Quayle,	31-34	65	-7
JC Ritchie,	32-33	65	-7
Dan Bradbury,	32-34	66	-6
Davis Bryant,	34-32	66	-6
Joe Dean,	33-33	66	-6
Ross Fisher,	33-33	66	-6
Michael Hollick,	34-32	66	-6
Paul Waring,	33-33	66	-6
Daniel Young,	31-35	66	-6
Quentin Debove,	33-34	67	-5
Manuel Elvira	32-35	67	-5
Nacho Elvira	34-33	67	-5
Ewen Ferguson,	35-32	67	-5
Rikuya Hoshino,	34-33	67	-5
Kota Kaneko	34-33	67	-5
Jeong-Weon Ko,	34-33	67	-5
Romain Langasque,	36-31	67	-5
Adrian Meronk	32-35	67	-5
Carlos Ortiz	34-33	67	-5

AL Standings

East	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Tampa Bay	51	33	.607	—	—	8-2	W-8	31-12	20-21
Yankees	48	38	.558	4	+4	2-8	L-7	22-18	26-20
Toronto	41	46	.471	11½	3½	3-7	W-1	24-25	17-21
Baltimore	40	48	.455	13	5	4-6	W-1	24-23	16-25
Boston	37	48	.435	14½	6½	6-4	L-2	17-27	20-21

Central	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Cleveland	46	42	.523	—	+1	5-5	W-2	23-20	23-22
Chicago	45	41	.523	—	—	6-4	L-2	28-14	17-27
Minnesota	42	46	.477	4	3	5-5	W-1	22-23	20-23
Detroit	38	50	.432	8	7	4-6	L-1	23-21	15-29
Kansas City	35	53	.398	11	10	3-7	L-3	19-25	16-28

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Seattle	45	43	.511	—	—	6-4	W-3	25-19	20-24
Texas	45	43	.511	—	—	7-3	W-1	20-18	25-25
Houston	43	46	.483	2½	2½	6-4	L-1	21-23	22-23
Athletics	41	46	.471	3½	3½	3-7	W-1	19-25	22-21
Los Angeles	36	52	.409	9	9	5-5	L-3	21-22	15-30

***WGB:** Games behind third-place team in wild-card race

Thursday

Cleveland 6, White Sox 5
Tampa Bay 5, Kansas City 2
Texas 10, Detroit 4
Seattle 1, L.A. Angels 0

Friday

Minnesota at **Yankees**, 7:05
L.A. Angels at Seattle, 9:40
Baltimore at Cincinnati, 7:10
White Sox at Cleveland, 7:10
Tampa Bay at Houston, 8:15
Boston at L.A. Angels, 9:38
Miami at Athletics, 9:40
Toronto at Seattle, 10:10

Saturday

Minnesota at **Yankees**, 1:35
Detroit at Texas, 4:05
Toronto at Seattle, 4:10
Baltimore at Cincinnati, 7:10
White Sox at Cleveland, 7:10
Tampa Bay at Houston, 7:10
Philadelphia at Kansas City, 8:10
Boston at L.A. Angels, 9:38
Miami at Athletics, 9:40

NL Standings

East	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Atlanta	50	35	.588	—	—	2-8	L-1	25-16	25-19
Philadelphia	49	39	.557	2½	+2	7-3	L-1	25-21	24-18
Miami	46	42	.523	5½	1	6-4	L-2	28-17	18-25
Washington	45	43	.511	6½	2	5-5	W-2	17-25	28-18
Mets	36	51	.414	15	10½	2-8	L-1	19-24	17-27

Central	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Milwaukee	53	32	.624	—	—	7-3	L-1	29-18	24-14
Chicago	49	38	.563	5	+2½	9-1	W-5	26-17	23-21
St. Louis	45	39	.536	7½	—	5-5	W-1	23-21	22-18
Pittsburgh	44	44	.500	10½	3	5-5	W-1	23-22	21-22
Cincinnati	40	46	.465	13½	6	3-7	W-1	19-22	21-24

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	*WGB	L10	Streak	Home	Away
Los Angeles	57	31	.648	—	—	8-2	W-1	27-14	30-17
Arizona	43	43	.500	13	3	4-6	L-1	26-18	17-25
San Diego	43	43	.500	13	3	4-6	L-6	23-21	20-22
San Francisco	36	50	.419	19½	10	5-5	W-1	18-22	18-28
Colorado	35	53	.398	21½	12	5-5	W-2	20-24	15-29

***WGB:** Games behind third-place team in wild-card race

Thursday

Pittsburgh 6, Philadelphia 1
Cincinnati 7, Milwaukee 2
Colorado 14, Miami 4
L.A. Dodgers 12, San Diego 7
St. Louis 11, Atlanta 5

Friday

Mets at Atlanta, 7:15
St. Louis at Cubs, 4:05
Pittsburgh at Washington, 6:45
Baltimore at Cincinnati, 7:10
San Francisco at Colorado, 8:10
Miami at Athletics, 9:40
Milwaukee at Arizona, 9:45
San Diego at L.A. Dodgers, 10:10

Saturday

Mets at Atlanta, 8:08
Pittsburgh at Washington, 11:05 a.m.
Baltimore at Cincinnati, 7:10
St. Louis at Cubs, 8:08
Philadelphia at Kansas City, 8:10
San Francisco at Colorado, 8:10
Miami at Athletics, 9:40
Milwaukee at Arizona, 9:40
San Diego at L.A. Dodgers, 10:10

POST SU DOKU Puzzles on Page 34

2	1	7	6	5	3	4	9	8
6	5	9	8	4	2	1	7	3
3	4	8	7	9	1	6	2	5
8	7	2	3	6	9	5	1	4
1	3	5	4	7	8	9	6	2
9	6	4	1	2	5	8	3	7
4	8	3	2	1	6	7	5	9
5	2	6	9	8	7	3	4	1
7	9	1	5	3	4	2	8	6

Solution to Very Easy #7,328

4	5	6	7	2	1	8	3	9
1	2	8	5	3	9	4	7	6
7	3	9	6	8	4	5	2	1
8	9	1	4	7	2	6	5	3
6	4	3	8	9	5	7	1	2
5	7	2	1	6	3	9	8	4
2	1	4	9	5	8	3	6	7
9	8	7	3	1	6	2	4	5
3	6	5	2	4	7	1	9	8

Solution to Difficult #7,118

Pirates 6, Phillies 1

Pittsburgh	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Mangum cf-lf	5	2	3	0	0	1	.310
Lowe 2b	4	1	2	0	1	1	.243
Reynolds lf-rf	4	0	1	0	1	2	.280
Valdez rf	4	1	2	3	0	1	.316
Cook cf	0	0	0	0	0	0	.167
O'Hearn 1b	5	0	1	0	0	2	.285
Gonzales 3b	5	1	3	2	0	0	.305
Ozuna dh	3	0	1	0	2	2	.202
Rodríguez c	4	1	1	1	1	2	.269
Triolo ss	4	0	0	0	1	1	.232
Totals	38	6	14	6	6	12	

Philadelphia	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Turner ss	4	0	1	0	0	2	.239
Schwarber dh	3	0	0	0	1	2	.250
Harper 1b	4	0	1	1	0	1	.274
Marsh lf	4	0	0	0	0	1	.315
Bohm 3b	4	0	1	0	0	1	.223
Stott 2b	4	0	1	0	0	2	.244
Rincones rf	3	0	0	0	0	1	.159
Crawford cf	3	0	0	0	0	0	.253
Marchán c	2	1	0	0	1	0	.113
Totals	31	1	4	1	2	10	

Pittsburgh	000 010 221	—	6	14	0
Philadelphia	001 000 000	—	1	4	0

LOB: Pittsburgh 12, Philadelphia 5. **2B:** O'Hearn (12), Mangum (9), Bohm (12), Harper (16). **3B:** Valdez (1). **HR:** Rodríguez (5), off Trivino; Gonzales (4), off Backhus. **RBIs:** Valdez 3 (15), Gonzales 2 (38), Rodríguez (16), Harper (57). **SB:** Lowe (1). **CS:** Lowe (0). **SF:** Valdez. **Runners left in scoring position:** Pittsburgh 5 (Mangum 2, O'Hearn, Triolo, Rodríguez); Philadelphia 3 (Marsh 2, Rincones). **RISP:** Pittsburgh 5 for 17; Philadelphia 1 for 4.

Pittsburgh	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Jones	4.0	2	1	1	2	6	73	5.28
Mlodzinski, W, 5-3	3.0	2	0	0	0	0	35	3.33
Soto	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	8	4.25
Montgomery	1.0	0	0	0	0	3	14	4.54

Philadelphia	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Rangel	4.0	3	0	0	4	4	90	3.38
Mayza	1.0	3	1	1	0	1	13	2.95
Bowlan	1.0	2	0	0	0	2	24	3.42
Alvarado, L, 3-3	1.0	3	2	2	0	2	27	6.10
Trivino	1.0	2	2	2	2	2	33	14.40
Backhus	1.0	1	1	1	0	1	12	5.93

T: 3:02. **A:** 37,851 (42,901).

Rockies 14, Marlins 4

Miami	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Hicks dh	4	1	1	1	0	0	.282
Jiménez 3b	1	0	0	0	0	0	.209
Lopez ss	5	2	3	0	0	0	.336
Stowers 1b	4	0	1	0	1	1	.231
Edwards 2b	2	0	0	2	1	0	.301
Conine lf-rf	2	0	0	0	2	1	.269
Caissie rf	1	0	0	1	0	0	.239
Hernández ph-lf	2	0	0	0	0	0	.218
Marsee cf	3	1	0	0	1	0	.187
Sanoja 3b-p	4	0	2	0	0	0	.281
Mack c	3	0	0	0	1	1	.250
Totals	31	4	7	4	6	3	

Colorado	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
McCarthy rf	4	3	2	4	1	1	.298
Moniak lf	5	3	3	2	0	1	.280
Rumfield 1b	4	2	2	1	0	0	.293
Castro ss	3	1	1	2	0	0	.270
Tovar ss	1	0	0	0	0	0	.204
Johnston dh	4	1	2	2	1	0	.315
Carrigg cf	3	1	1	2	0	1	.269
Karros 3b	3	0	0	0	1	1	.255
Sullivan c	5	1	2	1	0	0	.219
Julien 2b	3	2	1	0	2	0	.231
Totals	35	14	14	14	5	4	

Miami	201 100 000	—	4	7	0
Colorado	102 207 02x	—	14	14	0

LOB: Miami 8, Colorado 7. **2B:** Lopez (23), Rumfield (19), Moniak (11), Johnston (23). **3B:** Lopez (5). **HR:** Moniak (15), off Gusto; McCarthy (7), off King. **RBIs:** Edwards 2 (32), Caissie (47), Hicks (54), Moniak 2 (37), Castro 2 (35), McCarthy 4 (41), Rumfield (46), Johnston 2 (38), Carrigg 2 (13), Sullivan (14). **CS:** Sullivan (1). **SF:** Caissie, Edwards, Carrigg 2. **Runners left in scoring position:** Miami 5 (Lopez 3, Marsee 2); Colorado 2 (Carrigg, Julien). **RISP:** Miami 0 for 8; Colorado 6 for 10.

Miami	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Gusto	3.0	4	3	3	2	2	51	5.55
King, L, 6-2	2.0	1	2	2	1	1	28	2.31
Faucher	0.1	3	4	4	1	1	14	4.37
Gibson	1.2	4	3	3	0	0	34	7.00
Sanoja	1.0	2	2	2	1	0	18	18.00

Colorado	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Lorenzen	4.1	4	4	4	6	1	95	6.91
Bernardino, W, 3-3	1.1	1	0	0	0	0	15	3.34
Vodnik, H, 4	1.1	1	0	0	0	0	12	6.31
Agnos	2.0	1	0	0	0	2	26	7.09

T: 2:54. **A:** 19,595 (50,144).

Reds 7, Brewers 2

Cincinnati	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
De La Cruz ss	5	0	1	0	0	1	.272
Stewart 3b	4	1	1	1	1	2	.257
Bleday lf	4	1	1	0	1	2	.237
Suárez dh	4	1	1	0	1	2	.207
Lowe 1b	4	0	1	0	0	2	.253
Steer pr-1b	1	0	0	0	0	0	.235
Marte rf	5	1	1	1	0	1	.200
Arroyo 2b	3	0	0	0	0	2	.257
McLain 2b	1	1	0	0	0	0	.195
Trevino c	4	1	3	3	0	0	.232
Friedl cf	3	1	2	2	0	1	.181
Totals	38	7	11	7	3	13	

Milwaukee	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Yelich dh	3	0	0	0	1	1	.252
Chourio lf	4	1	1	0	0	1	.295
Turang 2b	4	0	1	1	0	2	.259
Contreras c	4	0	0	0	0	1	.293
Bauers 1b	4	0	0	0	0	1	.264
Mitchell cf	3	1	1	1	1	0	.265
Frelick rf	2	0	0	0	0	0	.250
Pratt ss	3	0	0	0	0	0	.182
Hamilton 3b	2	0	1	0	0	1	.235
Ortiz ph-3b	1	0	0	0	0	0	.202
Totals	30	2	4	2	2	7	

Cincinnati	100 400 110	—	7	11	1
Milwaukee	000 011 000	—	2	4	1

E: De La Cruz (6), Bauers (6). **LOB:** Cincinnati 8, Milwaukee 4. **2B:** Turang (18). **HR:** Stewart (17), off Misiorowski; Trevino (1), off Misiorowski; Friedl (3), off Anderson; Mitchell (7), off Burns. **RBIs:** Stewart (60), Marte (9), Trevino 3 (7), Friedl 2 (10), Mitchell (40), Turang (49). **SB:** Yelich (6), Hamilton (18). **CS:** Turang (3). **S:** Friedl. **Runners left in scoring position:** Cincinnati 5 (Suárez 2, De La Cruz, Marte, Stewart); Milwaukee 2 (Contreras, Chourio). **RISP:** Cincinnati 3 for 11; Milwaukee 0 for 3.

Cincinnati	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Burns, W, 10-1	6.0	4	2	2	2	4	89	2.40
Moll	1.1	0	0	0	0	1	24	4.00
Antone	0.2	0	0	0	0	1	5	2.52
Burke	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	11	3.05

Milwaukee	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Misiorowski, L, 9-4	5.0	5	5	1	0	10	82	1.47
Anderson	1.2	1	1	1	0	2	20	3.53
Koenig	0.1	1	0	0	2	0	21	0.00
Kuhnel	1.0	3	1	1	0	0	21	4.84
Stallings	1.0	1	0	0	1	1	19	0.00

T: 2:40. **A:** 41,390 (41,700).

Rays 5, Royals 2

Tampa Bay	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Díaz dh	3	0	0	0	2	0	.326
Aranda 1b	5	0	1	0	0	0	.292
Caminero 3b	5	0	0	0	0	0	.288
Mesa rf	4	0	0	0	0	0	.188
Simpson lf	4	2	3	0	0	0	.278
Mullins cf	4	1	2	2	0	0	.217
Walls ss	3	1	1	1	1	1	.232
Palacios 2b	3	1	1	1	0	1	.227
Williamson ph-2b	1	0	0	0	0	0	.236
Feduccia c	4	0	3	1	0	1	.238
DeLuca pr	0	0	0	0	0	0	.264
Fortes c	0	0	0	0	0	0	.254
Totals	36	5	11	5	3	3	

Kansas City	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Jensen c	4	1	2	1	0	1	.251
Witt ss	4	0	0	0	0	1	.290
Caglianone 1b	4	0	1	0	0	1	.264
Thomas cf	4	0	1	0	0	1	.213
Marte dh	3	0	0	0	0	2	.260
Rojas ph	1	0	0	0	0	1	.250
Loftin 3b	3	0	0	0	1	0	.224
Massey 2b	4	0	0	0	0	1	.256
Collins lf	3	1	1	1	0	1	.232
Misner rf	3	0	0	0	0	1	.250
Totals	33	2	5	2	1	10	

Tampa Bay	030 020 000	—	5	11	1
Kansas City	100 000 100	—	2	5	0

E: Caminero (12). **LOB:** Tampa Bay 7, Kansas City 5. **2B:** Walls (11), Thomas (9). **3B:** Feduccia (1). **HR:** Mullins (10), off Dobnak; Jensen (13), off Seymour; Collins (4), off Booser. **RBIs:** Walls (20), Palacios (22), Feduccia (9), Mullins 2 (29), Jensen (47), Collins (25). **SB:** Witt (29), Simpson (20). **Runners left in scoring position:** Tampa Bay 4 (Caminero, Palacios 2, Aranda); Kansas City 2 (Marte, Caglianone). **RISP:** Tampa Bay 4 for 8; Kansas City 0 for 2.

Tampa Bay	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Seymour, W, 5-1	6.0	3	1	1	1	8	83	4.02
Booser	1.0	1	1	1	0	1	15	1.59
Cleavinger, H, 13	1.0	1	0	0	0	0	10	4.12
Baker, S, 22-25	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	8	1.89

Kansas City	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Kolek, L, 4-3	2.0	4	3	3	1	0	51	4.50
Dobnak	4.0	6	2	2	1	2	64	4.50
Schreiber	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	12	3.18
Lynch	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	9	2.57
Cruz	1.0	1	0	0	1	0	16	5.27

T: 2:18. **A:** 16,814 (38,427).

Guardians 6, White Sox 5

Chicago	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Antonacci lf	4	1	2	1	0	1	.299
Grichuk ph	1	0	0	0	0	0	.263
Perez lf	0	0	0	0	0	0	.250
Vargas 3b	5	1	1	0	0	2	.244
Teel c	4	0	1	2	1	2	.233
Benintendi dh	4	0	1	0	0	0	.243
C.Montgomery ss	4	0	1	0	0	1	.221
B.Montgomery rf	3	1	1	0	1	0	.243
Meidroth 2b	4	1	1	2	0	0	.272
Peters cf	4	1	1	0	0	0	.286
Gonzalez 1b	4	0	1	0	0	0	.253
Totals	37	5	10	5	2	6	

Cleveland	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Bazzana 2b	3	1	2	1	2	1	.251
DeLauter dh	5	0	1	1	0	0	.274
Manzardo 1b	1	0	0	0	2	0	.230
Hoskins ph-1b	1	0	0	0	1	1	.181
Schneemann pr	0	1	0	0	0	0	.216
Watson rf	4	0	0	0	1	0	.261
Rocchio ss	4	1	1	3	1	1	.269
Ingle lf	3	0	0	0	0	0	.071
Fry ph-lf	1	1	1	1	0	0	.220
Arias 3b	4	1	1	0	0	0	.211
Bailey c	4	1	2	0	0	1	.179
Kwan cf	2	0	1	0	2	0	.216
Totals	32	6	9	6	9	4	

Chicago	000 032 000	—	5	10	0
Cleveland	002 001 102	—	6	9	2

E: Ingle (2), Arias 2 (2). **LOB:** Chicago 7, Cleveland 10. **2B:** Peters (18), Antonacci (12), Vargas (16), Teel (1), B.Montgomery (8), Bailey (4), Bazzana (12). **HR:** Meidroth (7), off Cecconi; Fry (6), off Eisert; Rocchio (6), off Taylor. **RBIs:** Antonacci (24), Teel 2 (8), Meidroth 2 (29), Bazzana (26), Rocchio 3 (37), DeLauter (39), Fry (13). **CS:** Antonacci (5), DeLauter (2). **RISP:** Chicago 4 for 15; Cleveland 1 for 9.

Chicago	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Martin	3.1	6	2	2	5	0	73	3.08
Murphy	1.2	0	0	0	0	0	15	4.00
Newcomb, H, 6	1.0	1	1	1	2	1	27	2.66
Eisert, H, 1	1.0	1	1	1	0	1	12	5.32
Taylor, L, 4-2, BS, 2-5	1.1	1	2	2	2	2	29	3.02

Cleveland	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Cecconi	5.0	9	5	5	1	3	100	4.44
Espino	1.2	1	0	0	1	2	35	5.40
Armstrong	1.1	0	0	0	0	0	15	4.50
Herrin, W, 1-3	1.0	0	0	0	0	1	10	2.97

T: 2:57. **A:** 22,556 (34,788).

Cardinals 11, Braves 5

St. Louis	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Wetherholt 2b	5	2	2	1	0	0	.261
Herrera dh	4	1	1	1	0	1	.252
Burleson 1b	5	2	1	1	0	1	.274
Walker rf	4	2	2	4	1	0	.291
Nootbaar lf	5	0	2	1	0	1	.300
Winn ss	4	1	3	1	1	0	.249
Church cf	5	1	1	2	0	0	.254
Jordan 3b	2	0	0	0	1	0	.214
Torres pr	0	1	0	0	0	0	.234
Pagés c	2	0	1	0	0	0	.224
Crooks c	2	0	1	0	0	1	.164
Fermín ph-3b	2	1	1	0	0	0	.266
Totals	40	11	15	11	3	4	

Atlanta	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Baldwin c	4	1	1	0	0	1	.255
Albies 2b	4	1	0	0	1	1	.273
Olson 1b	3	1	0	0	1	0	.270
Harris cf	4	0	1	0	0	1	.293
Dubón lf	3	1	2	1	1	1	.269
Smith dh	4	1	1	3	0	0	.278
Riley 3b	4	0	1	0	0	1	.208
Yastrzemski rf	3	0	1	1	0	0	.222
Jarvis ss	4	0	1	0	0	1	.222
Totals	33	5	8	5	3	6	

St. Louis	300 000 701	—	11	15	0
Atlanta	500 000 000	—	5	8	1

E: Olson (5). **LOB:** St. Louis 6, Atlanta 6. **2B:** Nootbaar (5), Smith (6). **HR:** Walker (19), off Waldrep; Church (7), off Kinley; Burleson (14), off Karinchak. **RBIs:** Walker 4 (63), Church 2 (25), Wetherholt (35), Herrera (36), Nootbaar (8), Winn (33), Burleson (58), Dubón (45), Smith 3 (35), Yastrzemski (20). **SF:** Yastrzemski. **RISP:** St. Louis 5 for 13; Atlanta 3 for 10.

St. Louis	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
May	0.2	5	5	5	2	1	34	4.80
Bruihl	2.2	1	0	0	0	2	40	3.60
Fernandez	1.2	1	0	0	0	0	12	1.50
Graceffo, W, 6-1	1.0	0	0	0	0	0	9	3.35
Romero	1.0	1	0	0	0	1	11	3.79
Soriano	1.0	0	0	0	1	0	17	3.38
Svanson	1.0	0	0	0	0	2	16	7.00

Atlanta	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Waldrep	5.1	5	3	3	1	4	76	3.68
Kinley, L, 4-3, BS, 0-3	0.2	2	3	3	1	0	11	3.82
Lee	0.1	3	3	3	0	0	20	1.64
Hamilton	1.2	3	1	1	0	0	27	7.71
Karinchak	1.0	2	1	1	1	0	24	2.08

T: 2:59. **A:** 34,524 (41,149).

Mariners 1, Angels 0

Los Angeles	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Neto ss	3	0	0	0	1	0	.225
Schanuel 1b	4	0	2	0	0	0	.265
Siri pr	0	0	0	0	0	0	.264
Guzman 3b	4	0	1	0	0	1	.267
Soler dh	4	0	1	0	0	3	.221
Walton pr	0	0	0	0	0	0	.307
Meckler lf	4	0	0	0	0	1	.282
Adell rf	3	0	0	0	0	1	.243
Peraza 2b	3	0	0	0	0	2	.252
Lowe cf	3	0	0	0	0	1	.212
O'Hoppe c	3	0	0	0	0	1	.228
Totals	31	0	4	0	1	10	

Seattle	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Crawford 3b	4	1	1	0	0	0	.214
Rodríguez cf	0	0	0	0	1	0	.259
Robles cf	0	0	0	0	0	0	.233
Wilson rf	2	0	0	0	0	2	.212
Canzone dh	3	0	0	0	1	0	.269
Arozarena lf	2	0	1	0	1	0	.284
Naylor 1b	4	0	0	0	0	1	.254
Raleigh c	2	0	0	1	1	2	.163
Raley rf-cf	3	0	0	0	0	2	.234
Young 2b	3	0	0	0	0	2	.259
Emerson ss	3	0	0	0	0	1	.213
Totals	26	1	2	1	4	10	

Los Angeles	000 000 000	—	0	4	1
Seattle	000 001 00x	—	1	2	1

E: Schanuel (4), Crawford (8). **LOB:** Los Angeles 5, Seattle 7. **2B:** Crawford (6). **RBIs:** Raleigh (24). **CS:** Neto (8). **Runners left in scoring position:** Los Angeles 3 (Soler, Adell, Meckler); Seattle 2 (Raley 2). **RISP:** Los Angeles 0 for 5; Seattle 0 for 4. **GIDP:** Naylor. **DP:** Los Angeles 1 (Neto, Schanuel).

Los Angeles	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Ureña, L, 5-7	5.2	1	1	1	4	6	107	3.03
Natera	1.1	0	0	0	0	3	19	0.84
Bachman	1.0	1	0	0	0	1	12	3.26

Seattle	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Miller, W, 4-2	7.0	2	0	0	0	8	90	1.71
Bazardo, H, 18	1.0	0	0	0	0	2	11	2.11
Muñoz, S, 16-21	1.0	2	0	0	1	0	15	4.60

T: 2:28. **A:** 36,019 (47,929).

This Date in Sports

1920 — Suzanne Lenglen beats Dorothea Chambers a second straight year (6-3, 6-0) to win the women's singles title at Wimbledon.
1925 — Suzanne Lenglen wins her sixth and final women's singles title at Wimbledon, easily beating Joan Fry, 6-2, 6-0.
1931 — Max Schmeling knocks out Young Stribling at 2:46 of the 15th round to retain the world heavyweight title in Cleveland.
1951 — Sam Snead wins his third PGA Championship with a 7 and 6 victory over Walter Burkemo at Oakmont (Pa.) Country Club.
1966 — Atlanta pitcher Tony Cloninger becomes the first National League player to hit two grand slams in one game. He adds a single for nine RBIs in a 17-3 triumph over San Francisco.
1976 — Bjorn Borg beats Ilie Nastase 6-4, 6-2, 9-7, to win his first men's singles title at Wimbledon.
1981 — Wimbledon Women's Tennis: Chris Evert beats Hana Mandlíková 6-2, 6-2 for her third and final Wimbledon singles title.
1982 — Martina Navratilova begins her streak of six straight singles titles at Wimbledon with a 6-1, 3-6, 6-2 victory over Chris Evert Lloyd. It's the third Wimbledon singles title for Navratilova, all against Evert Lloyd.
1983 — Calvin Smith sets the 100-meter world record at Colorado Springs, with a run of 9.93 seconds. He breaks the previous record of 9.95 set by Jim Hines in 1968.
1983 — Wimbledon Men's Tennis: American John McEnroe wins 5th career Grand Slam title; outclasses Chris Lewis of New Zealand 6-2, 6-2, 6-2.
1994 — FIFA World Cup: In a huge upset Romania eliminates Argentina 3-2 from the round of 16 at the Rose Bowl, Pasadena, California.

WNBA

East	W	L	Pct.	GB
Atlanta	12	8	.600	—
Liberty	12	8	.600	—
Indiana	11	8	.579	½
Washington	10	9	.526	1½
Toronto	9	10	.474	2½
Chicago	6	13	.316	5½
Connecticut	4	16	.200	8

West	W	L	Pct.	GB
Minnesota	15	4	.789	—
Las Vegas	14	5	.737	1
Golden State	13	7	.650	2½
Dallas	12	8	.600	3½
Los Angeles	8	10	.444	6½
Portland	8	12	.400	7½
Phoenix	8	13	.381	8
Seattle	5	16	.238	11

Thursday
Washington 81, Atlanta 76
Dallas 86, Connecticut 83
Phoenix 90, Seattle 67

Friday
Minnesota at **Liberty**, 7:30pm
Chicago at Las Vegas, 10pm

Saturday
Golden State at Atlanta, 1pm
Portland at Seattle, 9pm

Sunday
Dallas at Toronto, 3pm
Indiana at Las Vegas, 7pm

Men's World Cup

ROUND OF 32
Sunday, June 28
South Africa 0, Canada 1
Monday, June 29
Brazil 2, Japan 1
Germany 1, Paraguay 1, Paraguay advances 4-3 on penalty kicks
Netherlands 1, Morocco 1, Morocco advances 3-2 on penalty kicks
Tuesday, June 30
Norway 2, Ivory Coast 1
France 3, Sweden 0
Mexico 2, Ecuador 0
Wednesday, July 1
England 2, Congo 1
Belgium 3, Senegal 2, AET
United States 2, Bosnia-Herzegovina 0
Thursday
Spain 3, Austria 0
Portugal 2, Croatia 1
Switzerland 2, Algeria 0
Friday
Australia vs. Egypt, 2pm
Argentina vs. Cape Verde, 6pm
Colombia vs. Ghana, 9:30pm
ROUND OF 16
Saturday
Canada vs. Morocco, 1pm
Paraguay vs. France, 5pm
Sunday
Brazil vs. Norway, 4pm
Mexico vs. England, 8pm
Monday
Portugal vs. Spain, 3pm
United States vs. Belgium, 8pm
Tuesday, July 7
Argentina/Cape Verde vs. Australia/Egypt, 12pm
Switzerland vs. Colombia/Ghana, 4pm

WTA Tour

H-hard, C-clay, G-grass
June 12-21 2026 — Bett1Open, GO (Linda Noskova)
June 12-21 2026 — Rothesay Open Nottingham, GO (Marie Bouzkova)
June 19-27 2026 — Bad Homburg Open, GO (Karolina Muchova)
June 19-27 2026 — Eastbourne Open, GO (Madison Keys)
June 21-July 11 — The Championships, GO
July 11-19 2026 — Athens, Greece, HO
July 11-19 2026 — UniCredit Iasi Open, CO

Rangers 10, Tigers 4

Detroit	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
McGonigle 3b	4	0	2	0	1	0	.284
Dingler c	5	0	2	0	0	2	.269
Carpenter rf	4	0	0	0	1	1	.232
Greene lf	5	0	1	0	0	3	.284
Keith dh	2	1	1	1	0	1	.251
Vierling ph-dh	3	0	0	0	0	0	.198
Torkelson 1b	4	0	1	0	0	1	.216
McKinstry ss	4	2	2	0	0	1	.199
Outman cf	2	0	0	0	0	2	.162
Malgeri ph-cf	1	0	1	1	1	0	.273
Lee 2b	4	1	1	2	0	3	.255
Totals	38	4	11	4	3	14	

Texas	AB	R	H	BI	BB	SO	Avg
Foscue 2b	2	0	0	0	1	1	.269
Smith ph-2b	2	1	2	2	0	0	.238
Jung 3b	3	1	2	2	2	0	.298
Duran rf	4	0	2	2	0	0	.276
Burger 1b	5	0	0	0	0	1	.246
Higashioka c	5	0	0	0	0	1	.212
Cauley cf	3	0	1	0	0	0	.167
Carter ph-cf	2	2	2	1	0	0	.186
Díaz dh	4	2	2	1	1	0	.300
Osuna lf	5	2	3	1	0	0	.258
Lopez ss	5	2	3	1	0	0	.337
Totals	40	10	17	10	4	3	

Detroit	**000 030 010 —**	**4 11**	**0**
Texas	**030 201 31x —**	**10 17**	**0**

LOB: Detroit 10, Texas 11. **2B:** Greene (18), McKinstry (6), Dingler (19), Jung (21), Díaz (6). **HR:** Keith (6), off Eovaldi; Lee (4), off Eovaldi; Díaz (4), off Valdez; Smith (1), off Brieske; Carter (7), off Finnegan. **RBIs:** Keith (19), Lee 2 (15), Malgeri (2), Díaz (16), Jung 2 (34), Duran 2 (43), Smith 2 (8), Osuna (15), Lopez (9), Carter (22). **SB:** Lopez (4). **SF:** Duran. **Runners left in scoring position:** Detroit 5 (Carpenter, Vierling 2, Lee 2); Texas 7 (Lopez, Higashioka 2, Duran 2, Burger 2). **RISP:** Detroit 2 for 11; Texas 5 for 11.

Detroit	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Valdez, L, 4-6	5.0	9	5	5	2	1	87	4.29
Brieske	1.2	1	1	1	0	1	23	10.50
Sommers	0.0	4	3	3	1	0	26	6.23
Jansen	0.1	0	0	0	1	0	9	5.23
Finnegan	1.0	3	1	1	0	1	19	2.23

Texas	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Eovaldi, W, 9-7	5.0	6	3	3	1	9	85	4.02
Alexander, H, 7	0.2	1	0	0	1	1	18	2.50
Gray, H, 5	0.2	1	0	0	1	1	16	2.97
Ahlstrom, H, 2	0.2	0	0	0	0	1	9	3.86
Winn	1.0	2	1	1	0	1	17	7.07
Collyer	1.0	1	0	0	0	1	12	3.50

T: 3:14. **A:** 33,450 (40,000).

NASCAR

NASCAR Cup Series Schedule-Winners
March 1 — DuraMAX Texas Grand Prix Powered by RelaDyne (Tyler Reddick)
March 8 — Straight Talk Wireless 500 (Ryan Blaney)
March 15 — Pennzoil 400 presented by Jiffy Lube (Denny Hamlin)
March 22 — Goodyear 400 (Tyler Reddick)
March 29 — Cook Out 400 (Chase Elliott)
April 12 — Food City 500 (Ty Gibbs)
April 19 — AdventHealth 400 (Tyler Reddick)
April 26 — Jack Link's 500 (Carson Hocevar)
May 3 — Würth 400 presented by LIQUI MOLY (Chase Elliott)
May 10 — Go Bowling at The Glen (Shane Van Gisbergen)
May 17 — NASCAR All-Star Race (Denny Hamlin)
May 24 — Coca-Cola 600 (Daniel Suárez)
May 31 — Cracker Barrel 400 (Denny Hamlin)
June 7 — FireKeepers Casino 400 (Denny Hamlin)
June 14 — Great American Getaway 400 presented by VISITPA (Denny Hamlin)
June 21 — Anduril 250 (Corey Heim)
June 28 — Toyota / Save Mart 350 (Shane Van Gisbergen)
July 5 — eero 400, Joliet, Ill.
July 12 — Quaker State 400 Available at Walmart, Hampton, Ga.
July 19 — Window World 450, North Wilkesboro, N.C.
July 26 — Brickyard 400, Speedway, Ind.
Aug. 9 — Iowa Corn 350 Powered by Ethanol, Newton, Iowa
Aug. 15 — Cook Out 400, Richmond, Va.
Aug. 23 — Dollar Tree 301, Loudon, N.H.
Aug. 29 — Coke Zero Sugar 400, Daytona Beach, Fla.
Sept. 6 — Cook Out Southern 500, Darlington, S.C.

Wimbledon

At All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club; London; Purse: €30,060,000; Surface: Grass; (seedings in parentheses):
Men's Singles - Second Round
Alex de Minaur (5), Australia, def. Adrian Mannarino, France, 6-3, 6-2, 6-2.
Taylor Fritz (6), United States, def. Patrick Kypson, United States, 6-2, 6-2, 7-5.
Arthur Fery, Britain, def. Otto Virtanen, Finland, 5-7, 7-6 (3), 6-3, 6-3.
Lorenzo Sonego, Italy, def. Gabriel Diallo, Canada, 7-6 (4), 4-6, 7-6 (4), 6-7 (6), 6-2.
Zizou Bergs, Belgium, def. Jaime Faria, Portugal, 7-6 (6), 4-6, 6-2, 6-3.
Zachary Svajda, United States, def. Kamil Majchrzak, Poland, 2-6, 6-2, 6-7 (5), 6-4, 6-3.
Marcos Giron, United States, def. Quentin Halys, France, 7-6 (5), 6-3, 6-4.
Alexander Zverev (2), Germany, def. Valentin Royer, France, 6-1, 6-3, 7-6 (3).
Jaume Munar, Spain, def. Jacob Fearnley, Britain, 6-4, 7-6 (3), 6-4.
Karen Khachanov (19), Russia, def. Yannick Hanfmann, Germany, 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.
Matteo Berrettini, Italy, def. Arthur Fils (20), France, 6-4, 7-5, 3-6, 6-3.
Flavio Cobolli (9), Italy, def. James Duckworth, Australia, 7-6 (4), 3-6, 7-6 (3), 6-1.
Jiri Lehecka (13), Czechia, def. Alex Molcan, Slovakia, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4.
Alexander Bublik (10), Kazakhstan, def. Kyrian Jacquet, France, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6 (5).
Frances Tiafoe (17), United States, def. Jan Choinski, Britain, 4-6, 6-2, 7-5, 6-2.
Grigor Dimitrov, Bulgaria, def. Jakub Mensik (15), Czechia, 7-6 (5), 4-6, 7-5, 6-3.
Women's Singles - Second Round
Daria Snigur, Ukraine, def. Leolia Jeanjean, France, 6-4, 6-3.
Marie Bouzkova (21), Czechia, def. Tyra Caterina Grant, Italy, 7-5, 6-3.
Emma Navarro (23), United States, def. Oksana Selekhmeteva, Russia, 3-6, 6-4, 6-1.
Liudmila Samsonova, Russia, def. Diana Shnaider (15), Russia, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.
Ashlyn Krueger, United States, def. Mariam Bolkvadze, Georgia, 6-1, 6-0.
Madison Keys (26), United States, def. Katie Swan, Britain, 6-1, 6-4.
Iga Swiatek (3), Poland, def. Karolina Pliskova, Czechia, 6-1, 6-3.
Alexandra Eala (29), Philippines, def. Maya Joint, Australia, 3-6, 6-2, 6-0.
Marta Kostyuk (12), Ukraine, def. Anna Blinkova, Russia, 6-7 (5), 6-3, 6-3.
Amanda Anisimova (6), United States, def. Sofia Kenin, United States, 6-2, 4-6, 7-6 (3).
Maria Sakkari, Greece, def. Kamilla Rakhimova, Russia, 6-3, 0-6, 7-6 (7).
Elise Mertens (25), Belgium, def. Maria Timofeeva, Russia, 2-6, 6-3, 6-0.
Sorana Cirstea (17), Romania, def. Kimberly Birrell, Australia, 6-3, 6-4.
Elena Rybakina (2), Kazakhstan, def. Caty McNally, United States, 6-1, 6-2.
Jasmine Paolini (13), Italy, def. Viktorija Golubic, Switzerland, 7-6 (0), 6-4.
Linda Noskova (9), Czechia, def. Camila Osorio, Colombia, 6-3, 4-6, 6-2.

ATP Schedule

ATP Tour Schedule- Winners
H-hard, C-clay, G-grass
June 5-14 2026 — Libema Open, GO (Kamil Majchrzak)
June 5-14 2026 — Boss Open, GO (Ben Shelton)
June 12-21 2026 — Terra Wortmann Open, GO (Frances Tiafoe)
June 12-21 2026 — Cinch Championships, GO (Francisco Cerundolo)
June 19-27 2026 — Eastbourne Open, GO (Zizou Bergs)
June 19-27 2026 — Mallorca Championships, GO (Alejandro Davidovich Fokina)
June 21-July 11 — The Championships, GO
July 12-19 2026 — Nordea Open, CO
July 11-19 2026 — Swiss Open, CO
July 11-19 2026 — Croatia Open Umag, CO
July 18-26 2026 — Millennium Estoril Open, CO
July 18-26 2026 — Generali Open, CO
July 25-July 31 — Abierto Mexicano de Tenis Mifel, HO

SPORTSCROSS

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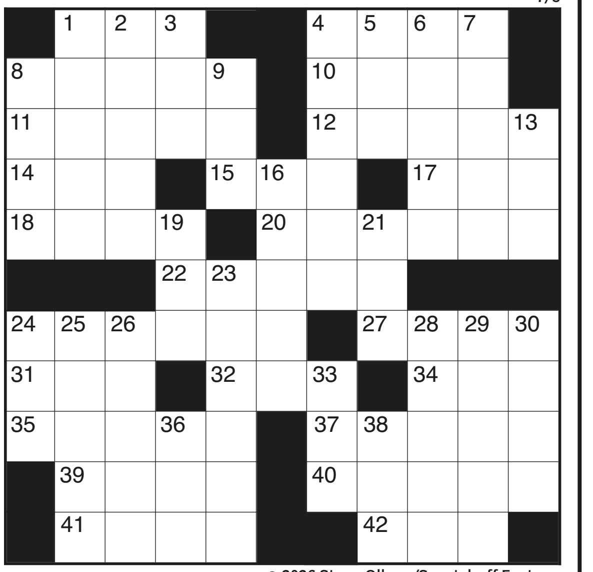

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ACROSS
1 Red Raiders' logo
4 Overflow
8 Met hurler who buzzed Hoskins
10 Gerrit Cole's college
11 Ex-Met Ramírez
12 Ndur was the first Nigerian-born player in the NHL
14 Pal in Paris
15 INF Maxvill 1962-75
17 Hill trio
18 White in the hoop Hall of Fame
20 He spoke at Yankee Stadium on the 4th of July, 1939
22 KC RB called "The Nigerian Nightmare"
24 He got his 3,000th strikeout as a Yank on the 4th of July, 1984
27 His then-record 40-game hit streak was stopped on the 4th of July, 1911
31 Sum (abbr.)
32 Not —— rule
34 College grid Hall of Famer Augie
35 Alaska Baseball League Miners
37 Righetti no-hit them on the 4th of July, 1983
39 They beat Atlanta, 16-13. in 19 innings on the 4th of July, 1985
40 Mike from Mineola pitched 1976-83
41 Giant guard 2004-13
42 Genetic trio

DOWN
1 The Yankees halted his HR streak at seven games on the 4th of July, 2002
2 LB Whitehead 2012-21
3 Actress Thurman
4 Yankee who one-hit Washington on the 4th of July, 1959
5 Pirates' univ. in NC
6 RHP Rodríguez
7 Rose won three Indy 500s in the '40s
8 Ex-Met who got his 3,000th strikeout on the 4th of July, 1980
9 Finish
13 Racehorse
16 Former Red Bulls Sporting Director
19 High sign
21 Washington's —— Edmundson Pavillion
23 Bulls GM for their six title teams
24 SE Asian front
25 Muslim prayer leaders
26 AL HR leader (22) for the 1944 Yankees
28 Brave who led the NL in HR (54) & RBIs (139) in 2023
29 California college
30 Square or rectangular
33 Police bulletin
36 Sault —— Marie
38 He won the Norris Trophy eight times

SOLUTION IN SATURDAY'S POST

NWSL

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
San Diego	8	4	1	25	19	13
Utah Royals FC	7	2	3	24	18	10
Portland	7	3	3	24	20	14
Washington	6	2	3	21	18	9
Gotham FC	**6**	**2**	**3**	**21**	**12**	**5**
Kansas City	7	5	0	21	18	17
North Carolina	5	3	3	18	17	13
Orlando	5	5	2	17	18	17
Denver Summit FC	4	4	3	15	17	13
Seattle	4	5	2	14	10	13
Houston	4	6	2	14	14	19
Angel City	4	6	1	13	16	14
Bay FC	3	6	2	11	9	17
Boston Legacy FC	2	7	3	9	11	19
Chicago	3	9	0	9	5	24
Louisville	2	8	1	7	15	20

NOTE: Three points for victory, one point for tie.
Friday
Houston at Washington, 8pm
Kansas City at Denver Summit FC, 9:30pm
Orlando at Angel City, 10pm
Saturday
Seattle at North Carolina, 6:30pm
Gotham FC at San Diego, 8:45pm
Sunday
Bay FC at Boston Legacy FC, 12pm
Utah Royals FC at Chicago, 5pm
Louisville at Portland, 7pm
Friday, July 10
Chicago at Boston Legacy FC, 8pm
Bay FC at Louisville, 8pm
Kansas City at Orlando, 8pm
Gotham FC at Utah Royals FC, 10pm
Saturday, July 11
Washington at North Carolina, 6:30pm
Angel City at San Diego, 8:45pm
Sunday, July 12
Portland at Seattle, 4pm
Houston at Denver Summit FC, 7pm

NBA Summer League Schedule

Friday
Miami vs. San Antonio, 8pm
L.A. Lakers vs. Golden State, 10:30pm
Saturday
Nets vs. Kings, 5pm
Memphis vs. Oklahoma City, 3pm
Milwaukee vs. Golden State, 3pm
Atlanta vs. Utah, 5pm
Sunday
Nets vs. Bucks, 3pm
Miami vs. L.A. Lakers, 4:30pm
Golden State vs. Sacramento, 5pm
San Antonio vs. Golden State, 7pm
Monday
Golden State vs. **Nets**, 8pm
L.A. Lakers vs. San Antonio, 7:30pm
Atlanta vs. Oklahoma City, 7pm
Memphis vs. Utah, 9pm
Miami vs. Golden State, 10pm
Milwaukee vs. Sacramento, 10pm
Tuesday
Atlanta vs. Memphis, 7pm
Oklahoma City vs. Utah, 9pm
Thursday
Minnesota vs. New Orleans, 3:30pm
San Antonio vs. Atlanta, 4:30pm
Detroit vs. Philadelphia, 5:30pm
Golden State vs. Dallas, 7pm
Charlotte vs. Orlando, 7:30pm
Utah vs. Washington, 9pm
Sacramento vs. L.A. Clippers, 11pm
Friday
Nets vs. **Knicks**, 6pm
Milwaukee vs. Miami, 4pm
Cleveland vs. Indiana, 4:30pm
Houston vs. Denver, 6:30pm
Chicago vs. Memphis, 8pm
Boston vs. Toronto, 9pm
Oklahoma City vs. L.A. Lakers, 10pm
Portland vs. Phoenix, 11pm

Vikes coach praises Jets' Mougey, his former mate

By RYAN DUNLEAVY

Kevin O'Connell found himself repeatedly sending some version of the same text message to his former college roommate at various points during the Jets offseason.

And, no, he wasn't just blowing smoke in GM Darren Mougey's direction.

"Most of the time I was complimenting him on whether it was a great draft they had, or how they handled some of their internal situations there — getting their running back (Breece Hall re-signed)," O'Connell, the Vikings head coach, said Thursday on a Zoom ahead of golfing in the American Century Championship.

"I just think the plan that he's had has been really well thought-out. It's one thing — a lot of teams put the time and the energy in to have as much good planning as you can — but it's about the execution of those plans. The way Darren has gone about it doesn't surprise me."

O'Connell, a former Jets backup quarterback who now is regarded as one of the league's top quarterback whisperers, and Mougey were San Diego State football teammates who have stayed in touch during their non-overlapping NFL journeys.

"I know there's not a day Darren shows up to work that he doesn't feel prepared — and I think that's proving to be the case," O'Connell said. "He's not afraid to make difficult decisions, and I think that's because it's in alignment with the process that he has. He's attempting to execute a vision that he has for that organization. As a former Jet, it's always good to see the organization in good hands — and they certainly are with Darren and A.G. (head coach Aaron Glenn)."

After Mougey loaded up on draft picks by trading Quinnen Williams and Sauce Gardner during a teardown 2025 season, the 2026 Jets should feature at least six new defensive starters thanks to spreading around a relatively modest $88.4 million free-agency tab, three rookies drafted in the first round (including pass-catchers Kenyon Sadiq and Omar Cooper Jr.) and a new stopgap quarterback (Geno Smith).

The POST Line

MLB

Friday

Favorite	Money Line	Underdog
YANKEES	$152-188	Twins
BRAVES	$101-123	**Mets**
GUARDIANS	$110-136	White Sox
ASTROS	-108-108	Rays
ANGELS	-102-116	Red Sox
Blue Jays	$106-124	MARINERS
Cardinals	$106-124	CUBS
NATIONALS	$111-135	Pirates
Giants	$132-156	ROCKIES
Brewers	$138-169	D'BACKS
DODGERS	$194-243	Padres
Orioles	$102-124	REDS
ATHLETICS	$107-131	Marlins

Home team in CAPS

FIFA World Cup

Friday- Round of 32

Favorite	Money Line	Underdog
*Egypt	$115-145	Australia
**Argentina	$950-1600	Cape Verde
***Colombia	$375-525	Ghana
*Dallas, **Miami, ***Kansas City		
Saturday- Round of 16		
*Morocco	$200-250	Canada
**France	$850-1400	Paraguay
*Houston, **Philadelphia		
Sunday- Round of 16		
*Brazil	$175-225	Norway
**England	$110-140	Mexico
*MetLife Stadium, **Mexico City		
Monday- Round of 16		
*Belgium	-110-115	United States
**Spain	$170-220	Portugal
*Seattle, **Arlington, TX		

WNBA

Friday

Favorite	PTS (O/U)	Underdog
Lynx	1.5 (173.5)	**LIBERTY**
ACES	9.5 (182.5)	Sky
	Sunday	
ACES	5.5 (183.5)	Fever

CFL

Friday

Favorite	PTS (O/U)	Underdog
Roughriders	5.5 (56.5)	REDBLACKS
	Saturday	
Elks	1.5 (57.5)	LIONS
	Sunday	
TIGER-CATS	3.5 (57.5)	Blue Bombers

TOP PLAY

Twins bring lumps of Cole

By DYLAN SVOBODA

The Yankees open a weekend series against the Twins on Friday night in The Bronx, and they will do so with one of their biggest names on the mound.

Gerrit Cole gets the ball for the Bombers, but this has not been the cleanest stretch for the veteran right-hander.

Cole has looked more hittable than usual lately as he works his way back into peak form after Tommy John surgery, and the biggest issue has been the long ball.

He has allowed seven home runs over his past five starts, including two in his latest outing against the Red Sox and three against the Guardians in early June.

That is not exactly ideal with a power-heavy Twins lineup coming to Yankee Stadium tied for the ninth-most long balls in the majors heading into Thursday's play, and Byron Buxton is the hitter who stands out most.

Buxton has not needed many chances to do damage against Cole, going just 2-for-7 in his career against the Yankees ace, but both hits left the yard in a 2022 matchup.

Buxton, who leads Minnesota with 25 home runs this season, trailing only Yordan Alvarez in the American League, is day to day with a hip issue, leaving his status in question, but the Twins have enough weapons for Minnesota to make Cole pay if he continues to miss over the plate.

Target Buxton if he returns to the lineup and fade Cole regardless in what is set to be a scorcher in the Big Apple.

THE PLAYS: Byron Buxton to hit a home run; Gerrit Cole to go Over his earned runs prop.

Pitching Form

		(Game time)	2026			'25 vs OPP		CAREER	LAST 3 STARTS		
			W-L	ERA	*REC	W-L	ERA	vs OPP	W-L	IP	ERA
Twins	Paredes (R)		0-1	4.26	3-1	0-0	0.00	0-0	0-1	15.0	4.20
Yankees	Cole (R)	(7:05pm)	2-3	4.06	3-4	0-0	0.00	5-0	1-2	15.2	6.32
Mets	Scott (R)		2-0	3.20	8-2	0-0	0.00	0-1	1-0	14.2	3.68
Braves	Holmes (R)	(7:15pm)	4-4	3.96	9-6	0-1	3.60	0-1	0-2	10.1	6.10
Orioles	Rogers (L)		5-7	4.99	6-9	0-0	0.00	0-1	2-1	19.1	1.40
Reds	Singer (R)	(7:10pm)	3-7	5.12	6-10	0-0	0.00	0-2	1-1	16.1	3.31
Marlins	Phillips (R)		1-3	3.02	2-4	0-0	0.00	1-0	0-2	17.1	6.23
Athletics	Perkins (R)	(9:40pm)	2-3	6.00	1-4	—	—	—	0-0	15.0	5.40
Angels	Ureña (R)		5-6	3.14	6-7	0-0	0.00	0-0	1-2	16.1	5.51
Mariners	Miller (R)	(9:40pm)	3-2	1.97	3-4	1-1	5.17	2-2	1-2	18.2	2.89
White Sox	Kay (L)		6-3	4.50	9-6	0-0	0.00	0-0	0-2	13.2	5.27
Guardians	Williams (R)	(7:10pm)	9-4	3.81	11-6	0-0	3.60	1-1	0-1	15.0	6.60
Rays	Martinez (R)		7-2	2.66	12-4	0-1	4.50	4-5	1-0	17.0	3.71
Astros	Arrighetti (R)	(8:15pm)	7-4	4.00	9-4	0-0	0.00	0-1	0-3	15.0	10.80
Red Sox	Bennett (L)		2-3	3.27	2-4	0-0	0.00	0-0	1-1	17.2	1.53
Angels	Detmers (L)	(9:38pm)	3-5	3.88	8-9	1-0	0.00	3-1	1-0	18.2	3.38
Blue Jays	Cease (R)		4-4	3.02	9-6	0-0	8.31	0-0	1-1	15.1	3.52
Mariners	Castillo (R)	(10:10pm)	3-6	4.93	5-8	1-1	7.20	2-3	1-1	15.2	4.02
Cardinals	Pallante (R)		9-5	3.83	10-6	0-0	12.00	0-4	2-1	19.2	3.66
Cubs	Peterson (L)	(4:05pm)	4-6	5.86	3-6	0-0	14.73	0-0	1-2	14.2	7.36
Pirates	Keller (R)		6-5	4.87	9-8	0-1	11.25	1-4	1-1	17.1	3.63
Nationals	Griffin (L)	(6:45pm)	8-2	2.93	13-4	0-0	6.75	0-0	1-0	20.1	0.89
Giants	Webb (R)		5-5	3.09	5-9	0-0	2.08	11-3	2-1	23.0	0.78
Rockies	Feltner (R)	(8:10pm)	2-2	4.42	5-6	1-0	0.00	1-3	0-0	16.2	2.70
Brewers	Harrison (L)		8-1	2.57	11-4	0-0	9.00	0-2	1-0	17.1	2.08
D'Backs	Cabrera (R)	(9:45pm)	0-1	3.60	0-2	0-0	0.00	0-0	0-1	10.0	3.60
Padres	King (R)		5-7	3.55	7-10	1-1	3.18	3-1	1-2	15.2	4.02
Dodgers	Ohtani (R)	(10:10pm)	8-2	1.58	8-5	1-0	0.00	1-1	2-0	18.2	4.34

*** REC:** Won-lost record of pitcher's team in games he has started.

SPORTS SHORTS

MLB: Cavalli, Contreras get bans

Nationals pitcher **Cade Cavalli** and Red Sox first baseman **Willson Contreras** were each issued a seven-game suspension by Major League Baseball for their roles in a benches-clearing fight between the teams.

Nationals pitcher **Miles Mikolas** (five games) and Red Sox outfielder **Nate Eaton** (three games) were also suspended by MLB for their actions during the dustup that took place at Fenway Park in the fourth inning of Tuesday night's game.

● In Cleveland, **Brayan Rocchio** hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning that gave the Guardians a 6-5 victory over the White Sox in the opener of a four-game series between the top two teams in the AL Central.

● In Atlanta, **Jordan Walker** homered and drove in four runs and the Cardinals beat the Braves 11-5.

● In Seattle, **Bryce Miller** took a no-hitter into the seventh inning as the Mariners defeated the Angels 1-0 to complete a three-game sweep.

NHL: Ovechkin returns to Capitals

Alex Ovechkin is not ready to skate away from the NHL. Ovechkin signed an incentive-laden deal to return for a 22nd season and give the longtime captain the opportunity to add to his jaw-dropping total of 929 goals.

Ovechkin, who turns 41 on Sept. 17, signed a deal with a $1 million salary and bonuses worth an additional $8 million.

● The Canadiens' **Jakub Dobes**, who led all rookie goaltenders with 29 wins this past season, signed a three-year, $16.07 million contract extension.

● The Maple Leafs signed free agent forward **Brandon Duhaime** to a three-year contract. Multiple reports put the total value of the deal at $7.8 million.

TENNIS: Anisimova survives

Amanda Anisimova served three of her 20 aces in the deciding tiebreaker to hold off **Sofia Kenin** 6-2, 4-6, 7-6 (3) and reach the third round at Wimbledon as **Kate**, the Princess of Wales, visited the All England Club in London.

Swiatek, who beat Anisimova 6-0, 6-0 for the 2025 title on Centre Court, needed just 70 minutes to get past 2021 Wimbledon finalist **Karolina Pliskova** 6-1, 6-3. A well-dressed sixth-seeded American **Taylor Fritz** impressed again, beating compatriot P**atrick Kypson** 6-2, 6-2, 7-5 to reach the third round.

ETC.: Former All-Pro Mitchell dies

● Former Texas A&M All-American and Saints Pro Bowl linebacker **Keith Mitchell**, who was part of the school's "Wrecking Crew" defense in the 1990s, has died, his college and family confirmed to KBTX He was 51. Details surrounding the cause of his death haven't been provided yet, but his family told KBTX that it was "sudden and unexpected."

● **Lucas Glover** and **Zac Blair** share the first-round lead at the John Deere Classic after posting bogey-free, 8-under 63s in Silvis, Ill.

STITCHES

Change of scenery suits Peterson

Ladies, if you are attending Taylor Swift's wedding at MSG, please note that Phil Mickelson will be seated at Table 11.

Rivalry resumed. The Cardinals and Cubs at Wrigley. The Cards' Andre Pallante gave up five runs and lost to the Marlins, snapping a four-game winning streak. David Peterson — yes, David Peterson — beat the Brewers after taking off his Mets uni and donning Cubs colors. $50 on the born-again Peterson and the Cubs.

-$

We knew betting the heavily favored Brewers (at -198) was as dangerous as climbing the Empire State Building. And we fell.

Nice of Jacob "Miserable" Misiorowski to wait for us to have his worst outing since high school. The Reds scored five runs in five innings and bruised the Brewers 7-2. Sal Stewart and Jose Trevino went deep for Cincinnati. Damaging loss has us at -165 salbandos.

stitches@nypost.com

NEW YORK POST ACTION

Home Team Lineups

HOME AWAY

	TODAY July 3	SAT July 4	SUN July 5	MON July 6	TUE July 7
	Minnesota 7:05 YES 660 AM 101.9 FM	Minnesota 1:35 YES 660 AM 101.9 FM	Minnesota 1:35 NBCSN 660 AM 101.9 FM	Tampa Bay 6:40 YES 660 AM 101.9 FM	Tampa Bay 6:40 YES 660 AM 101.9 FM
	Atlanta 7:15 PIX11 880 AM	Atlanta 8:08 Fox 880 AM	Atlanta 12:30 NBC Peacock 880 AM	Atlanta 7:15 SNY 880 AM	Kansas City 7:10 SNY 880 AM
	Minnesota 7:30 ION	NO GAME	NO GAME	NO GAME	Dallas 8:00 ESPN

Wednesday, July 22	Wednesday, July 22	Saturday
FIFA World Cup Break until July 22	FIFA World Cup Break until July 22	San Diego Wave FC 8:45 ION

Today's Sports on the Air

	MLB BASEBALL	
4 p.m.	Cardinals at Cubs	MLBN
7 p.m.	White Sox at Guardians	MLBN
7:05 p.m.	Twins at Yankees	YES, 660 AM, 101.9 FM
7:15 p.m.	Mets at Braves	PIX11, 880 AM
8 p.m.	Rays at Astros	Apple TV
9:30 p.m.	Brewers at Diamondbacks	Apple TV
10 p.m.	Blue Jays at Mariners	MLBN
	MEN'S SOCCER: FIFA WORLD CUP	
2 p.m.	Round of 32: Australia vs. Egypt	Fox, Telemundo
6 p.m.	Round of 32: Argentina vs. Cape Verde	Fox, Telemundo
9:30 p.m.	Round of 32: Colombia vs. Ghana	Fox, Telemundo
	WNBA BASKETBALL	
7:30 p.m.	Lynx at Liberty	ION
10 p.m.	Sky at Aces	ION
	NBA BASKETBALL	
8 p.m.	Summer League: Heat vs. Spurs	ESPN2
10:30 p.m.	Summer League: Lakers vs. Warriors	ESPNU
	TENNIS	
6 a.m.	ATP/WTA: Wimbledon, 3rd Round	ESPN
6 p.m.	ATP/WTA: Wimbledon, 3rd Round; Women's Doubles 1st Rd.	Tennis
	NWSL WOMEN'S SOCCER	
10 p.m.	Orlando Pride at Angel City FC	Prime Video
	GOLF	
6:30 a.m.	DP World Tour: BMW International Open, 2nd Round	Golf
11 a.m.	PGA Tour Champions: U.S. Senior Open Championship, 2nd Rd.	Golf
4 p.m.	PGA Tour: John Deere Classic, 2nd Round	Golf
5:30 p.m.	PGA Tour Champions: U.S. Senior Open Championship, 2nd Rd.	NBCSN
	AUTO RACING	
7:30 a.m.	Formula 1: British Grand Prix, Practice	Apple TV
11:30 a.m.	Formula 1: British Grand Prix, Sprint Qualifying	Apple TV
2 p.m.	Indy NXT Series: Grand Prix at Mid-Ohio - Race 2, Practice	FS2
3 p.m.	NTT IndyCar Series: Honda Indy 200 at Mid-Ohio, Practice	FS2
6 p.m.	NASCAR Cup Series: eero 400, In-Season Challenge Round 2, Practice	truTV
8 p.m.	ARCA Menards Series: Ashley Furniture 150	FS1
	TRACK AND FIELD	
11:30 p.m.	USATF: Prefontaine Classic (Diamond League)	NBCSN
	HORSE RACING	
1 p.m.	Saratoga Live	FS2
3 p.m.	Saratoga Live	FS2
6 p.m.	Saratoga Live	FS1
	YOUTH BASEBALL	
10 a.m.	Ripken National Championships Round of 16	CBSSN
3:30 p.m.	Ripken National Championships Quarterfinals	CBSSN
9 p.m.	Ripken National Championships Quarterfinals	CBSSN
	AFL FOOTBALL	
11 p.m.	Melbourne at Hawthorn	FS2
2 a.m. (Sat.)	Gold Coast at Collingwood	FS2
	RUGBY	
5:30 a.m. (Sat.)	NRL: Cronulla-Sutherland at Brisbane	FS2

ODDS & ENDS

WORLD CUP
Thursday
Australia vs. Egypt

3-WAY BETTING (90 minutes plus stoppage time)	ODDS
Australia	+225
Draw	+185
Egypt	+145

TOTAL GOALS (including extra time)	ODDS
Over 2.5	+120
Under 2.5	-148

ANYTIME GOAL SCORER (including extra time)	ODDS
Mohamed Salah (EGY)	+205
Omar Marmoush (EGY)	+280
Mohamed Touré (AUS)	+295
Nestory Irankunda (AUS)	+295
Mostafa Ziko (EGY)	+295
Trézéguet (EGY)	+310

BOTH TEAMS SCORE (including extra time)	ODDS
Yes	+102
No	-128

Argentina vs. Cape Verde

3-WAY BETTING (90 minutes plus stoppage time)	ODDS
Argentina	-600
Draw	+650
Cape Verde	14/1

TOTAL GOALS (including extra time)	ODDS
Over 2.5	-180
Under 2.5	+146

ANYTIME GOAL SCORER (including extra time)	ODDS
Lionel Messi (ARG)	-215
Julián Alvarez (ARG)	-120
Lautaro Martínez (ARG)	-120
José Manuel López (ARG)	+105
Giuliano Simeone (ARG)	+195
Nico Paz (ARG)	+195

BOTH TEAMS SCORE (including extra time)	ODDS
Yes	+205
No	-280

Colombia vs. Ghana

3-WAY BETTING (90 minutes plus stoppage time)	ODDS
Colombia	-190
Draw	+290
Ghana	+575

TOTAL GOALS (including extra time)	ODDS
Over 2.5	-110
Under 2.5	-110

ANYTIME GOAL SCORER (including extra time)	ODDS
Luis Díaz (COL)	+150
Luis Suárez (COL)	+150
Cucho Hernández (COL)	+160
Jhon Córdoba (COL)	+270
Carlos Andrés Gómez (COL)	+280
James Rodríguez (COL)	+280

BOTH TEAMS SCORE (including extra time)	ODDS
Yes	+124
No	-156

BET SMART

How to cash on Cape crusaders vs. Messi

Getty Images

LESS IS MORE: While Argentina has star Lionel Messi, its patient style combined with Cape Verde's tight defense makes this an Under bet for Michael Leboff.

By MICHAEL LEBOFF

David will meet Goliath on Friday night in Miami.

Lionel Messi and Argentina, the defending champions, are -1600 favorites (BetMGM) to advance past Cape Verde, which qualified for the knockout rounds in its first trip to the World Cup.

According to Transfermarkt, Argentina's squad value is just under $920 million. Cape Verde's roster checks in at $61.5 million.

That $860 million gap paints a picture of the task that lies ahead of this tournament's Cinderella story.

However, this is nothing new for the Blue Sharks.

Drawn into a group with Spain, Uruguay and Saudi Arabia, Cape Verde executed a terrific game plan by committing to playing disciplined defense and being fearless when it had the opportunity to counterattack.

Cape Verde held Spain, the pretournament favorite and current champion of Europe, scoreless in a nil-nil draw. It followed that up by coming from behind to draw Uruguay, which boasts a squad value of $410 million.

The Blue Sharks punched their ticket to the knockout round by holding their nerve against Saudi Arabia in a nil-nil draw. Cape Verde held Saudi Arabia to just 0.4 expected goals and three shots on target in that match.

Keeping a lid on Saudi Arabia may not seem like a huge accomplishment, but don't forget that match was a must-win for the Falcons. They had to go for it, but Cape Verde gave them nothing.

Considering their expectations and opposition, Cape Verde's defense was one of the most impressive units in the group stage. Argentina's was right there with them.

La Albiceleste may be known for their offensive dynamos, but it was Lionel Scaloni's defense that was the team's calling card.

Argentina conceded just one goal in the group stage — which came against Jordan in a meaningless match — and its three opponents, Algeria, Austria and Jordan, created just 1.6 expected goals combined.

The most interesting note from those performances is that Argentina didn't seem too fussed about dominating possession. Algeria actually had more of the ball in its 3-0 loss to Messi's bunch, while Austria was just behind at 46 percent.

Neither opponent generated anything of note, but it's noteworthy because it tells us that Argentina is not the type of team that will go all out to win back possession when it turns the ball over. It is much more comfortable playing a patient brand of soccer and waiting for an opportunity in transition or a moment of magic from Messi.

Don't be shocked if we see Argentina take time to get comfortable in this match. The last thing it'll want is to get punished for being too frisky against a side that has shown some promise on the counterattack. Uruguay learned that the hard way, and Spain almost did as well.

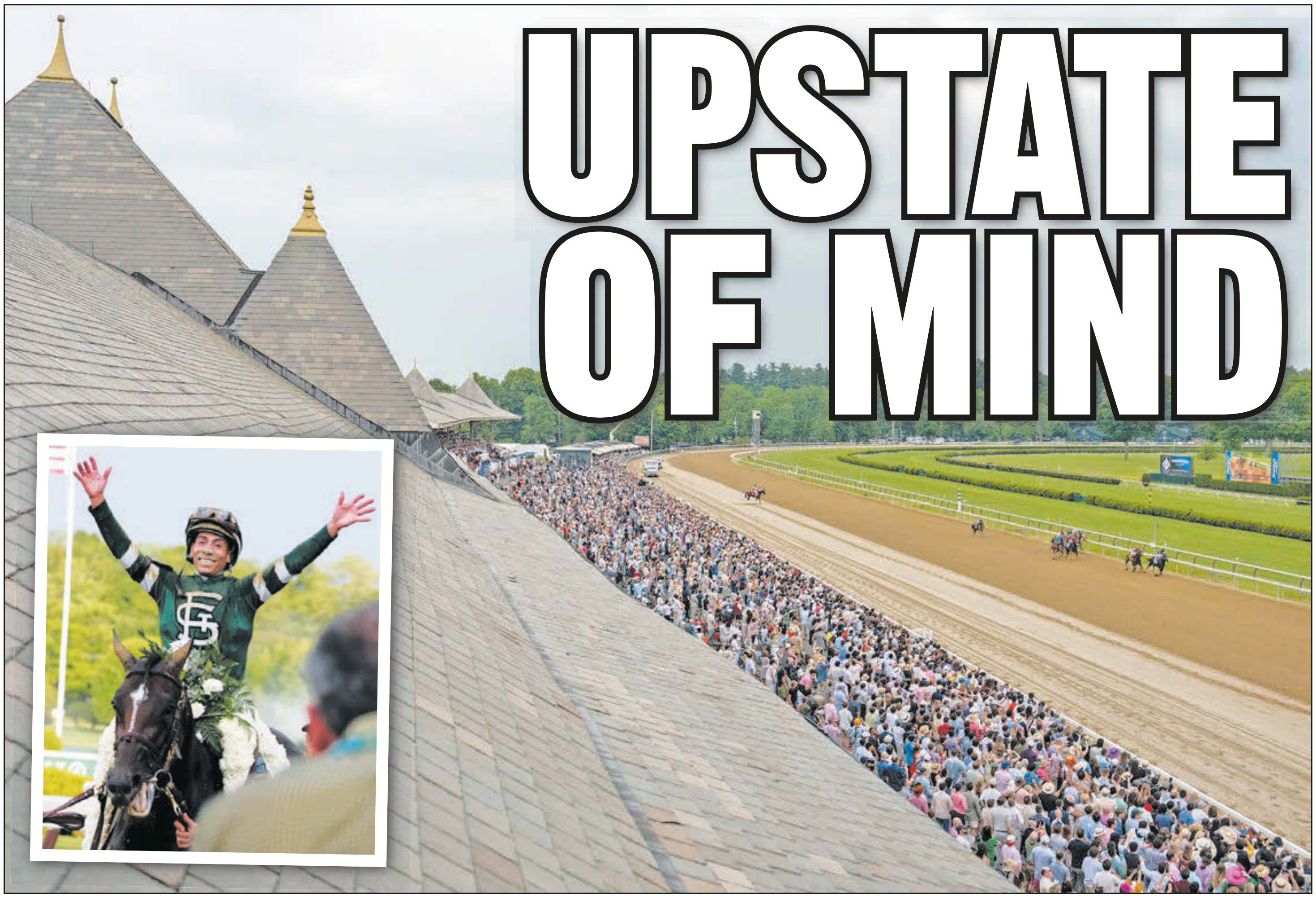
Cape Verde will happily oblige a patient, prodding approach from Argentina, as the longer this game remains scoreless, the better chance it has of shocking the world.

Holding Messi and Argentina scoreless for 90 minutes is a monumental task, but Cape Verde's defensive chops are legitimate, and its result against Spain will provide a blueprint for how it needs to approach Friday's showdown.

Argentina will almost certainly have enough to get through this test, but it may not be pretty. The Under 2.5 goals including extra time (+146, FanDuel) looks like a savvy way to play this one.

UPSTATE OF MIND

Venerable Saratoga kicks off expanded 46-day meet today



AND THEY'RE OFF! With construction at Belmont Park in the home stretch — and Aqueduct closing permanently — Saratoga Race Course will have an extra six days this summer. The Spa hosted the Belmont Stakes in June, with Jose Ortiz guiding Kentucky Derby winner Golden Tempo (inset) to glory.

AP; UPI

By VIC CANGIALOSI

You've done it all. Watched baseball games at Wrigley Field, Fenway Park and Yankee Stadium. Witnessed the spectacular Northern Lights. Sat in celebrity row at Madison Square Garden. Camped at the Grand Canyon. Wore a cheesehead at Lambeau Field. Proposed marriage at the Empire State Building antenna. Waved the checkered flag at the Brickyard. Visited the ancient pyramids. Kicked a soccer ball on the pitch at Wembley. Played tennis at Wimbledon and climbed Mount Everest. All good.

But have you been to Saratoga?

With Aqueduct forever in our hearts and permanently in our rear-view mirror, the Saratoga expanded 46-day, 10-week summer meet begins on July 3. Yes, from the "Graveyard of Queens" to the "Graveyard of Favorites."

The meet has more stakes than a cookout at a state fair.

Some races and horses of note:

Luminous Beauty, who broke her maiden by a half dozen lengths will go in the traditional opening day feature, the Schuylerville. Explosive action on the nation's 250th birthday: the Belmont Derby, Belmont Oaks and the Suburban.

International traveler Title Role, a winner in Germany and Dubai, will seek another victory in the Derby. Abashiri and Kensington Lane will be co-favorites in the Oaks. And Todd Pletcher's Antiquarian will try to rebound in the Suburban after losing to Nysos in the Met Mile.

The Diana will be run on July 18. The fillies will be front and center again when they load the gate for the Coaching Club American Oaks on July 25. The Vanderbilt is scheduled for that day as well. On Aug. 1 we will watch the Jim Dandy and Saratoga Special, but we won't see Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes champion Golden Tempo who is under the weather.

"He's fine, but the timeline just isn't going to suit us to get there. We will continue to do what got us here and put him first," trainer Cherie DeVaux said. "It's the hand that we've been dealt." And as for the Travers? "It's up to us and our team to get him there and have him ready to go."

Fans, media and officials at Saratoga are counting on it.

With Golden Tempo on hold, Renegade, narrowly defeated in the Derby then third in the Belmont will be there. So will Commandment, who finished between those two in the Belmont Stakes. Ohio Derby winner Chip Honcho is a likely starter for the Jim Dandy. Emerging Market and Chief Wallabee are questionable and are more likely to wait for the Travers.

Aug. 8 is Whitney day with the Fourstardave and Saratoga Special on the undercard. Heavyweights hook up in the Whitney. The star-studded field will include Magnitude, winner of the Stephen Foster; Nysos, who won the Met Mile; Nitrogen, winner of the Ogden Phipps; Baeza, Sovereignty and White Abarrio, who ran home 2nd, 3rd and 4th behind Magnitude in the Foster. Sovereignty won the 2025 Kentucky Derby and Belmont Stakes at Saratoga. White Abarrio is a multiple Grade 1 winner. Forever Young and Skippylongstocking are doubtful.

Alabama day is Aug. 22. Counting Stars and Always A Runner, who ran 1-2 in the Acorn, will be joined by Black Eyed Susan winner My Miss Mo.

The meet's main event, the Travers, will be run on Aug. 29. Results from the Jim Dandy and the Haskell at Monmouth Park will determine who goes. The Super Saturday card includes the Forego, Personal Ensign and Ballerina.

And as the meet winds down, 2-year-olds will be in the spotlight in the Spinaway and Hopeful.

Good luck. And may all the photo finishes go your way.

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Military veterans find community, common link on golf course

By MARK CANNIZZARO

Craig Thomas didn't know what to expect when he arrived at Liberty National Golf Club for the first time two months ago.

Thomas, a Marine Corps veteran from 1982-86 and the head golf professional at Metropolis Country Club in White Plains since 2007, was competing in the first Liberty Cup, a unique tournament that features all five branches of the military — the Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard.

In celebration of the nation's 250th anniversary, Liberty National Golf Club in early May hosted the event, founded by its owner, Dan Fireman, to be aired on the Golf Channel from 3 to 5 p.m. on July 4.

"I've played a lot of golf in a lot of tournaments, and I hadn't played with many players this good," the 63-year-old Thomas said, marveling at the talent in the Veteran Golfers Association, from which the field of players was made. "There was this young man named Travis Bryant who I was paired with. I hadn't played with anybody who was that good, and hit it as well as him who wasn't already on tour."

Bryant served as an Army combat veteran for five years and was on one of the last planes out of Afghanistan and is now a golf professional.

"The Liberty Cup is more than a golf tournament," Josh Peyton, president and CEO of the VGA, said. "It is a celebration of the men and women who have served our country and the bonds that continue long after military service ends."

The idea for the event was hatched by Dan Fireman, whose father, Paul, who founded and developed Liberty National, served in the Army.

"He was always proud that he did his duty and did his service," Dan Fireman said of his dad.

"The idea was to focus on America's 250th anniversary and use this event as a way to tell the story of the military and also tell the story of golf."

Liberty National has hosted PGA Tour events, LPGA Tour events, a Presidents Cup and has the BMW Championship coming in 2027. And Fireman called his experience hosting this event "the tops."

"It blew my mind," he said. "I've not been in the military, so I felt like I learned a lot about the military — about the sense of community and culture. With the storytelling, the depth of the history of the military, the different branches of armed services — I just felt like this has a lot of opportunity to become a real mainstay of Liberty.

"There was also a sense of appreciation for being there that I really loved."

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Capture the flag

RING BEARER: Christian Myrick, who will be a 10th grader, recently won gold with Team USA at the flag football USA Football Junior International Cup in Los Angeles and already has won more than 40 rings playing flag football. Heather Khalifa (2)

Deer Park sensation becoming one of nation's best football players

By ALEX MITCHELL

Christian Myrick is waving his flag proudly for Team USA.

It's already been a summer of dreams for the Deer Park rising 10th grader, who just won gold with America at the USA Football Junior International Cup in Los Angeles, cementing his status as one of the nation's best flag football stars for his age.

"I expected football to go well ... but I never thought Team USA would happen," the speedy wideout and defensive back told The Post.

Myrick displayed his moxie over nearly 1,800 of the nation's best flag stars who were 15 and under for months leading up to the June games.

"It made me proud because I honestly didn't even want to try out, because I didn't think I was going to make it," Myrick said.

"I'm glad I did," added the teen, who had a leaping 50-yard touchdown in the 47-14 championship win against Japan.

Passing expectations

Myrick obviously doesn't give himself enough credit.

He was a varsity football star at Deer Park in his freshman year, playing wherever coach Cody Ciolino needed him — whether it was quarterback, running back or safety in addition to the then-14-year-old's usual roles with the Falcons.

"When we take a step back this year and look at it, he accomplished all this as a 14-year-old," Ciolino said of his all-state athlete, who boasted 12 touchdowns and 825 yards.

"He has that natural leadership. As a freshman, there were kids, juniors, seniors, that were looking up to him."

After all, football is in Myrick's DNA.

His older brother, Matthew, is a defensive lineman at Post University, and Myrick's dad, Rodney, was a semi-pro player who fostered Christian's love for the game.

"My dad would coach from the sidelines to help me out and see things that I didn't see," Myrick said. "It helped a lot."

There is one more member of the Myrick clan who got Christian ready for his big break — his older sister, rising 12th-grader Olivia.

"My sister actually started out playing tackle with me before flag," he said.

"I would play up, she would play down, and we would be playing together on the same team."

Flag bearer

Playing the game at the collision level only made Myrick better at flag, pushing him to work on his jukes and other finesse moves to keep opponents from grabbing his cloth.

It became routine for him to play in tournaments all over the Northeast, where Myrick's name became synonymous with winning.

Myrick has a casual 40-plus championship rings — and some medals — in his five years of flag play.

"What I really want is to add a varsity title to the ring collection," Myrick said.

"And an Olympic gold medal," added the teenager, who dreams of playing for either Ohio State or LSU — before catching passes from Jaxson Dart as a New York Giant.

For now, Myrick is thriving in being a hometown hero and wants to keep making Deer Park proud.

"It's been great; my friends actually started calling me Team USA," Myrick said, laughing.

Ciolino also has high hopes for what Myrick will bring to the field when wearing shoulder pads.

"I think he should have everyone in Deer Park excited with his ability," the coach added.

Along with preparing for tryouts with Team USA's 17-and-under roster, the high-flying Falcon wants to cement success in his other sports: as a shooting guard in basketball and a talented runner in the spring.

"I want to have a bigger role. I know I have a pretty big role in football, but in the other sports, I feel like I can do better," Myrick said.

"I want to make sure I get that done."

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Tomcats bound for playoffs

Could it be any more patriotic?

The Fighting Tomcats of the American Soccer Club clinched the Long Island franchise's first playoff berth with a final regular-season victory over Osner's FC, 3-1, Wednesday night.

"I don't know if it's fate," head coach **John Fitzgerald** told The Post about earning the inaugural postseason spot days ahead of the USA's 250th birthday.

"But whatever it is, we'll take it."

ASC came up a point short of the playoffs last year in the team's NPSL season, but rewrote history this time around with a gritty 4-2-4 record.

"Maybe they tasted it a little bit, perhaps [in 2025]," Fitzgerald said. "My message to them was that you don't just arrive at this; it came because of what they've done beforehand."

The Tomcats will face the Albany-area New York Shockers on Wednesday for a conference finals spot against New Haven United FC.

"I told them, enjoy the moment, but then be ready and focused for next Wednesday and take care of yourselves," Fitzgerald said.

"These guys, they have a very professional attitude about it. They know what needs to be done, and they're very motivated, because they're the ones who actually do the work."

While he wholeheartedly trusts the squad, Fitzgerald did advise his crew to take it easy at the barbecues this weekend.

"I said not too many hamburgers and hot dogs this week," he said.

Ducks fans will have a blast

Thousands of Ducks fans are waddling into a treat on Fourth of July weekend.

The Long Island ballclub is taking its beloved tradition of postgame fireworks to an entirely new level in celebrating America's 250th birthday with plans for an unrivaled extravaganza.

"It will have more shells and bigger displays than we have in any of our normal pyrotechnic displays," team president **Michael Pfaff** told The Post.

"It will be a show that will be quite memorable."

The Ducks flocked to have the much bigger-than-usual pyrotechnic program ready for three games from Thursday through Saturday, the first against the Southern Maryland Blue Crabs, followed by the next two vs. the Hagerstown Flying Boxcars.

And black and orange is all about the red, white and blue beyond lighting up the night skies.

"I don't want to ruin any of the surprises, but we will have George Washington here on the Fourth of July to throw out our first pitch as well," Pfaff said. — *Alex Mitchell*

SIMPLY STELLAR

Stewart honored by news of latest All-Star Game starting nod

By MADELINE KENNEY

SHE BELONGS WITH THE BEST: Liberty superstar Breanna Stewart learned Thursday that she'll start the WNBA All-Star Game later this month in Chicago. Noah K. Murray

Breanna Stewart met coach Chris DeMarco in the Liberty family room Tuesday morning under the guise that she had to speak with the game broadcast crew for the Commissioner's Cup championship game later that night.

But the broadcast talent never showed up. Then, DeMarco's phone rang.

Stewart had no idea what was coming next.

Friday

LYNX AT LIBERTY

7:30 p.m.

ION

Commissioner Cathy Engelbert was on the other line and spilled the news that Stewart would be an All-Star starter in Chicago later this month.

Stewart has received this news seven times prior, but the revelation is no less significant.

"It's an honor to be an All-Star," Stewart said Thursday moments after the list of the 10 starters was revealed. "Even though I've had a few of them, each one is really special and not taking it lightly."

In Year 10 of her career, Stewart remains among the league's elite.

Hours after getting the call from Engelbert, she powered the Liberty to a Commissioner's Cup win that made New York the first team to win multiple in-season tournaments.

Stewart was named Cup MVP after a 25-point, 11-rebound performance. She was so disruptive on both ends of the floor that rival coach Becky Hammon had no choice but to tip her cap.

"I'm always going to stump for A'ja [Wilson] but Stewie, I could be effusive about that woman, in the sense of how good I think she is," Hammon said. "She's just a winner. I think she's about the right things all the time, even when she's not scoring. She makes winning moves, winning basketball plays all the time."

Stewart is that all-around player who's won everywhere she's gone. She quarterbacks the Liberty's defense, while anchoring the offense. New York goes wherever its trusty leader takes it.

Stewart is averaging 19.2 points, 8.5 rebounds and 2.8 assists this season. She's sixth in the league in blocks with 25 and tied for 12th in steals with 26.

She's a two-time league MVP, three-time WNBA champion and seven-time All-WNBA selection.

"She's just a winner," DeMarco said of Stewart. "You have to do it every year. You don't just get to be an All-Star because you were in the past. And she's been phenomenal. And really, really happy for her. And her teammates are really happy for her. She's been incredible this season."

And yet, Stewart is still somehow underrated by some.

Stewart is a top two player in the league — unless you're asking ESPN, which ranked her Thursday as fifth-best in the WNBA.

Stewart paused before saying she wasn't surprised to learn where ESPN ranked her.

"I don't know, I've got nothing for that," Stewart said. "Yeah, I think my game, based on ESPN, my game is definitely underrated."

Leonie Fiebich also disagreed with Stewart's ranking.

"For me, Stewie is like an amazing player, top players in the world," Fiebich said. "And I'm just really appreciative of getting to play with her."

Stewart is the only Liberty player who got the call from Engelbert this week. Jonquel Jones (15.2 points and 8.7 rebounds per game) made a convincing argument to be an All-Star starter, but didn't garner enough votes. The same goes for Sabrina Ionescu, who missed most of the first five-plus weeks of the season because of injuries.

The 12 reserves — voted on by coaches — will be announced Tuesday.

Benching adds to difficult stretch for Laney-Hamilton

By MADELINE KENNEY

LIBERTY NOTES

Betnijah Laney-Hamilton watched the Liberty win Tuesday's Commissioner's Cup championship from the bench.

She celebrated with her teammates by dancing and indulging in the champagne-soaked party.

"Anytime you win a championship and are able to accomplish something, it's a great thing, great for us, great for the community, for our fanbase, for our organization," Laney-Hamilton said after practice Thursday. "It was something that was really special and not only was it the championship, but it was also for a great cause and so I think anytime we're able to accomplish something like that, it's just great all around."

Tuesday was the second time in 10 days Laney-Hamilton suited up for the game only to sit on the bench.

Afterward, coach Chris DeMarco said Laney-Hamilton was "healthy," but explained her benching as the result of not knowing what the Aces were going to do with A'ja Wilson out with a foot injury.

"We tightened up the rotation a little bit tonight," DeMarco said after the 93-85 win. "But she's still gonna be a part of this [group] going forward."

Asked Thursday if she had discussed DeMarco's rotation plans ahead of the championship game, Laney-Hamilton subtly shook her head.

Laney-Hamilton is in the midst of one of the most challenging seasons of her career. She missed all of last season rehabbing from knee surgery. She entered this year the healthiest she had been for quite some time.

But this season hasn't been easy. Her role has varied. She went from being a starter to coming off the bench. She missed time for personal reasons early on and then again after having an injection in her surgically repaired knee.

Before the season, Laney-Hamilton signed a one-year, $400,000 deal to return to the Liberty this season. She's hoping to play her way into a bigger payday come next offseason.

In 14 games (five starts), she's averaging 5.3 points, 2.1 rebounds and 1.6 assists — her lowest totals since 2018.

➤ Lynx coach **Cheryl Reeve** has a chance to make history Friday.

Reeve tied **Mike Thibault's** WNBA record for career coaching wins earlier this week when Minnesota beat the Dallas Wings. It was her 379th regular-season win in 17 seasons with the Lynx.

Reeve's next victory will make her the winningest coach in WNBA history. Her next opportunity is against the Liberty.

➤ **Marine Johannès** missed Thursday's practice with an illness.

"We expect her to play tomorrow" DeMarco said.

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Pitino to honor fallen staffer

By ZACH BRAZILLER

Rick Pitino is planning to honor close friend Kenny Klein next season. Pitino is going to leave the seat next to him — that Klein traditionally sat in at the scorer's table — unoccupied during games. Asked about the team wearing a commemorative patch, Pitino said he has yet to talk to anyone from the school about it.

"We're definitely going to do something," Pitino said.

The 66-year-old Klein had a tragic episode at a dinner June 11 and never regained consciousness. He died June 25.

SJU NOTES

He spent the past two years working in the Red Storm's sports information department after a long career as Louisville's sports information director. Klein was inducted into the College Sports Information Directors of America Hall of Fame in 2015, and two years later he became a member of the Kentucky Athletic Hall of Fame. In 2012, he was awarded the Katha Quinn Award, presented by the U.S. Basketball Writers Association, for providing outstanding service to media covering college basketball.

Pitino gave a touching eulogy at Klein's funeral Monday.

"I had other things I wanted to say, and I couldn't get through it," Pitino said.

➤ Last week, St. John's had three players selected for the first time in the modern era of the NBA draft. **Zuby Ejiofor** was taken 23rd overall by the Hawks, while **Dillon Mitchell** went 40th to the Celtics and **Bryce Hopkins** was picked 49th by the Nuggets.

"I was elated, especially with Bryce getting drafted," Pitino said. "We didn't know he was going to get drafted, and we weren't sure about Zuby in the first round. There were a lot of question marks, but it turned out great."

Oziyah Sellers will join that trio in the NBA's summer league, inking a deal with the Knicks.

➤ Full team workouts will begin next week. Several players have been on campus taking part in individual workouts. The rest of the team arrives this weekend.

Free' fall

Losing star transfer to injury forces Johnnies to reshape their frontcourt

COSTLY LOSS: Donnie Freeman was expected to start at power forward for St. John's this upcoming season after transferring from Syracuse. Instead, a season-ending injury to Freeman has Rick Pitino evaluating options to fill the void in his frontcourt. Getty Images

By ZACH BRAZILLER

St. John's suffered its first loss of the season this week: a season-ending injury to highly regarded Syracuse transfer Donnie Freeman.

The expectation was that the 6-foot-9 rising junior would be the Johnnies' starting power forward next season. Without him, that spot could belong to high-flying Senegalese forward Babacar Sane.

"He was going to have a big role whether Donnie was healthy or not," coach Rick Pitino told The Post in a phone interview Wednesday. "He is the best athlete on the team by far. He was going to have a big role anyway."

The 6-foot-8 Sane spent last season playing in the top professional league in Germany, averaging 10.1 points and 3.8 rebounds for Riesen Ludwigsburg. He previously spent two years with G-League Ignite, the developmental team for top prospects. A longtime NBA scout who has followed Sane for years believes he is an impact player in the Big East.

"He's every bit of 6-foot-8, he's built like a tight end," the scout said. "He can run, he can jump, he shoots it better than OK."

Added Pitino: "[Assistant coach] Ricky Johns says Babacar is a flat-out beast, but I haven't personally seen him."

Freeman, who averaged 16.5 points, 7.2 rebounds and 1.3 assists for Syracuse a year ago, suffered a torn Achilles tendon during an individual workout on campus, according to Pitino. It was a freak thing, Freeman landing wrong. He has already undergone surgery and has been ruled out for next season.

"He's OK, he was down before," Pitino said. "He's going to be fine. We'll get him through this, and he'll be OK."

Losing Freeman is a major hit to the Red Storm's frontcourt depth. They are looking into adding another piece in the wake of Freeman's injury, likely from overseas.

As it stands, Pitino is still high on the roster. He has been particularly impressed by his two young big men, American Theo Edema and Bosnian Lazar Stojkovic. The two have been on campus the last few weeks taking part in Pitino's renowned skill development sessions ahead of full-team workouts, which begin next week.

"The two freshmen are really going to be good basketball players. Theo is more physically ready. Lazar is very skilled," Pitino said. "If we can get 15 pounds of muscle on Lazar, he'll be ready."

The two have performed so well, Pitino left open the possibility of starting one of them at center with Ruben Prey at power forward, although Sane being the guy at the four with Prey at center is the more likely scenario.

"We have a lot of possibilities because these freshmen are better than I thought," the coach said.

The 6-foot-11, 240-pound Edema committed to St. John's in May and reclassified to be a college freshman. He was initially going to return to Cushing Academy (Mass.) for another year.

"Theo is a physical individual," Pitino said. "He doesn't shoot the ball great, and that's something he has to work on. But he's gotten better and better. He improves every workout, which is unusual."

Pitino frequently made that statement about a young forward a few years ago. His name was Zuby Ejiofor, who last week became the program's first first-round draft pick in 14 years.

"He's a younger version of Zuby. He's a sponge, great attitude, works his butt off," Pitino said. "This kid should only be a senior in high school, but he has a lot of the same characteristics as Zuby. He has that same work ethic that Zuby has."

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CORE MORE YEARS?

Getty Images

CITY HAUL: Karl-Anthony Towns and Josh Hart celebrate winning the NBA title at City Hall in June. Both players, along with Miles McBride, are eligible for contract extensions.

Knicks have decisions to make this summer as Towns, McBride, Hart are eligible for extensions

SOME VERY significant extension eligibilities are around the corner.

As outlined to The Post by ESPN's cap expert Bobby Marks, Karl-Anthony Towns and Miles McBride can currently negotiate extensions and officially sign starting Monday.

Josh Hart, meanwhile, can officially sign an extension beginning Aug. 10, according to Marks.

All these extensions, if signed, would start in the 2027-28 season.

Coming off the franchise's first championship in 53 years, it would make sense to contractually lock up the key players involved. But as Mitchell Robinson's free agency underscored, there are sometimes other considerations — like aprons and egos.

With KAT and especially Hart, the guess is they'll agree to extensions before or during next season. Hart has gotten very comfortable in New York City as somebody idolized beyond what we typically see from role players. He's raking in endorsements and national TV appearances. If Hart desires, he can parlay this top media-market fame into a sweet analyst gig postretirement.

A discounted extension to stay — like his buddy Jalen Brunson — wouldn't be surprising.

There could be concerns about Hart's body breaking down during a long extension — he's the eldest starting Knick at 31 and has dealt with knee and back problems — but the forward is one of the top-conditioned players on the roster along with Mikal Bridges.

Stefan Bondy

Something to keep in mind: Hart has publicly stated he wants to get through one more extension before retirement, which he predicted would happen at about 35.

"I'm hoping, God willing, I have five more years playing this game, man," Hart said during the 2024-25 season. "My clock is ticking. I just want to win."

Towns is a little more complicated because of his massive current contract, which is paying him $57.1 million next season. Off that salary, KAT is eligible for a four-year, $272 million extension. He's an All-Star and a champion but that deal would send the Knicks into cap hell — especially with Brunson's extension eligibility upcoming in 2027.

Keeping the core together beyond next season would become a massive financial burden for owner James Dolan, who stated on WFAN that he's unwilling to spend into the second apron.

"If we can keep it all together. We all got to get in the room and say we going to do it," Towns, speaking on Shannon Sharpe's podcast, said recently when asked about taking a huge discount like Brunson, whose extension in 2024 paid out $100 million less than if he waited until free agency. "I mean, Jalen Brunson, shoutout to him. That's a lot of money. But you know what? You can't put a value on the fact that he's at where he wants to be. And I think that's a big value number that no one's thinking of."

Towns was also eligible for an extension before last season but negotiations went nowhere, leading to angst between the star and the organization. It was especially rocky around the trade deadline when KAT was being mentioned in discussions for Giannis Antetokounmpo. But winning tends to cure problems and KAT said he wants to retire with the Knicks. Again, the guess is an agreement before or during next season.

McBride's extension, meanwhile, is the diciest of the three.

First, he's eligible for a deal with a starting salary of around $21 million. That's a lot for a reserve and untenable for Dolan's second-apron restrictions. It's also unfair to ask McBride to take a discount after being underpaid for the first five years of his career.

He deserves a big payday — perhaps also a starting spot — and that's harder to envision in New York than in other spots.

If McBride's extension negotiations go nowhere, he becomes an immediate trade candidate.

So keep an eye out for the extensions. The negotiating window is big (technically, they have until June 30, 2027) but there are reasons the players want something finalized before opening night.

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Building in B'klyn going very slowly but surely

By BRIAN LEWIS

MINNESOTA
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BETTER DAYS AHEAD: Though the addition of Julius Randle isn't exactly like adding Jaylen Brown, the Nets are gathering enough assets and cap space to soon make a splash. Charles Wenzelberg / NY Post

In a summer that's already seen a number of stars traded, the Nets' moves have been more measured than momentous, raising the floor more than the ceiling.

The Nets are improved, but very much still incomplete.

Giannis Antetokounmpo, Kawhi Leonard and Jaylen Brown have all been dealt. Brown went for pennies on the dollar after the Nets had been linked to the now-former Celtics star.

But Brooklyn has maintained a more understated approach, moving past its overt two-year tank toward trying to compete, but staying patient. They've added a floor-raising All-Star in Julius Randle and value contracts — both retaining their own and acquiring others — while clutching their horde of assets.

It has left them three days into free agency with a team that is better than last season, but could still struggle to compete this season. Fortunately, they still have time and flexibility to fix that.

There is good, bad and unfinished so far in Brooklyn's offseason.

Starting with the positives: flipping Nic Claxton and a second-round pick for Randle and a first-rounder that became Joshua Jefferson. Randle's warts (subpar playoff performances) are still luxury problems for a rebuilding squad that would see even reaching the play-in as a major accomplishment. He's a reliable 20-point scorer and a clear upgrade over Claxton.

"I actually really like it," one agent with multiple All-Star clients told The Post. "He's great and will be good with his own team."

The Nets re-signed Day'Ron Sharpe and Josh Minott on deals that are widely regarded as good value. They inked Sharpe for two years and $20 million — making him just the 32nd-highest-paid center in the league — and Minott for two years and just $9 million, with a team option.

Brooklyn then opened free agency in earnest with understated moves. The departure of Claxton opened a hole at center, and while Sharpe stepped in as the nominal starter, they inked Moritz Wagner as the presumptive backup.

The Nets need point-of-attack defense, and instead of going for the pricier Lu Dort — who played under Jordi Fernández for Team Canada at the Olympics — they brought in another one of his former players in Keon Ellis. The latter spent two years with Fernández in Sacramento and developed into a low-usage 3-and-D type, a career 40.7 percent shooter from deep.

Two seasons ago — Fernández's last in Sacramento — Ellis ranked in the 99th percentile for blocks and 94th for steals, per Cleaning The Glass. He was 93rd and 96th this past season before heading to Cleveland at the trade deadline. He's a cheap, low-risk bet to regain his old form under his former coach.

Now, for the bad. The Nets' rim protection may crater. It was an Achilles' heel even with Claxton, and he's gone, with neither Sharpe nor Wagner offering much shot-blocking. Interior defense could be a serious problem.

Wagner had just two blocks in 427 total minutes last season coming off an ACL injury, and let foes shoot a worrying 64.4 percent inside 6 feet. Sharpe wasn't much better at 62.9. For perspective, Claxton had been 58.3, while the likes of Chet Holmgren, Isaiah Stewart and Isaiah Hartenstein were all under .500. In short, it's an issue.

Brooklyn does also have a glut at guard. Clearly Egor Dëmin and Mikel Brown Jr. are going to play. Ellis' defense likely ensures he will as well, potentially making Terance Mann redundant.

There is more work to do on this roster. With 15 players on guaranteed deals, $25 million in cap space and 13 future first-round picks, they almost certainly have another move coming.

Michael Porter Jr. still hasn't been extended, though that may be held up by his European vacation.

The Nets never seriously engaged on Brown, and Trey Murphy III seems unlikely at this point. But restricted free agent Peyton Watson has been in their sights and happens to have been vacationing with Porter in Italy. The Nuggets could match any offer for Watson, though they might have to move Cam Johnson to do so.

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Ramos, Ronaldo weather wild end to propel Portugal

Associated Press

WORLD CUP

Goncalo Ramos headed in the stoppage-time winner as Portugal beat Croatia 2-1 in a wild finish that also included a Croatian goal disallowed for offside just before the final whistle in a World Cup Round of 32 match on Thursday night in Toronto.

The game featured a matchup 40-somethings Cristiano Ronaldo of Portugal, in his sixth World Cup, and Croatia's Luka Modric, making his fifth bid for a tournament title.

Ronaldo initially tied things up in the 68th minute on a penalty kick, giving the megastar his first knockout stage goal at the World Cup before being subbed out in the 81st minute. But, it was Ramos who gave Portugal the victory and a berth in the round of 16.

Portugal moves on to face Spain on Monday.

"First half we dominated the game. In second half after the goal we get a little bit panic, but this is football," Ronaldo said. "After the penalty, I think it was a little bit better for us. We created a few chances and I think at the end of the day we deserved to win the match."

The game ended in controversy as Croatia thought it had tied things up 2-2 in the very last moments, but Mario Pasalic was called offside as VAR ruled no goal. Croatia fans threw bottles on the field and whistled in protest.

Croatia opened the scoring in the 53rd minute when Ivan Perisic scored off a cross from Josip Sanisic.

Ronaldo, booed loudly by Croatia fans every time he touched the ball, got his chance from the spot after Nikola Vlasic was called for a holding foul inside the box. Portugal's megastar hitched his step and converted down the middle as the goalkeeper went to his right.

Modric led Croatia to second- and third-place finishes in 2018 and 2022, and the match carried the weight of the two aging stars each trying to realize the dream of winning the World Cup. Modric is 40, while Ronaldo is 41.

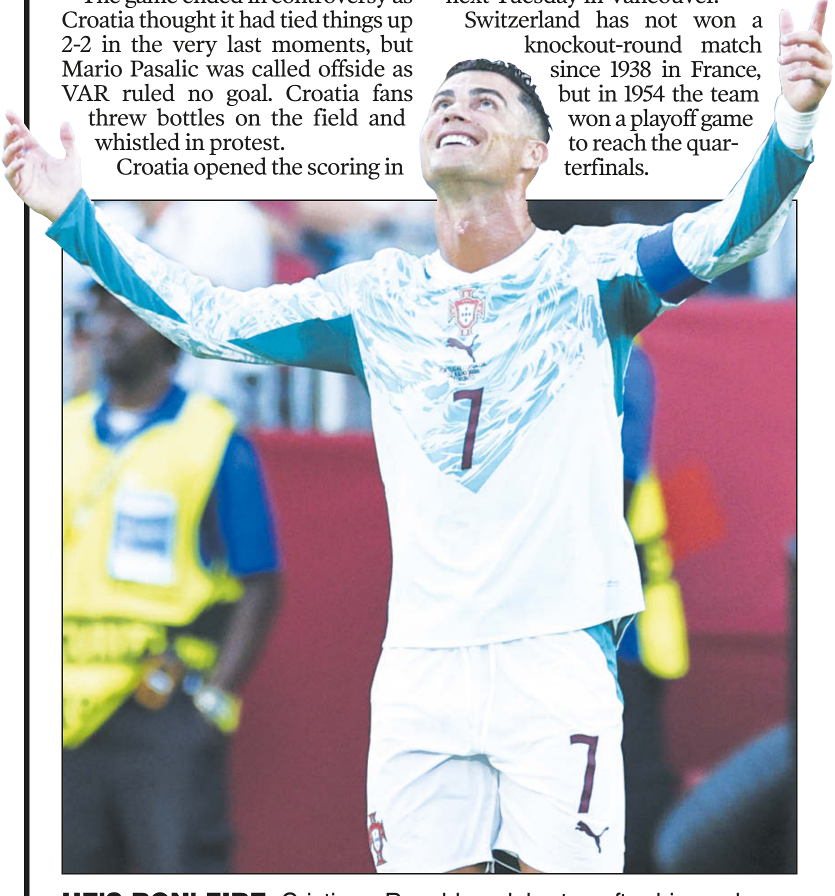
Switzerland 2, Algeria 0

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Breel Embolo and Dan Ndoye both scored and Switzerland advanced to the round of 16 at the World Cup with a victory over Algeria.

Switzerland will play the winner of Friday's match between Colombia and Ghana in Kansas City, Missouri.

The round-of-16 game is set for next Tuesday in Vancouver.

Switzerland has not won a knockout-round match since 1938 in France, but in 1954 the team won a playoff game to reach the quarterfinals.



HE'S RON' FIRE: Cristiano Ronaldo celebrates after his goal on a penalty kick in the 68th minute tied Thursday night's game against Croatia at 1-1 during World Cup Round of 32 play in Toronto. Shutterstock

ON THE FAST

Getty Images; AP; Charles Wenzelberg/NY Post

Rangers' flurry of moves reinforces Drury's 'retool'

By MOLLIE WALKER

Since the season ended, Rangers president and general manager Chris Drury removed chunks of salary off the books and infused a stale prospect pool with coveted talent and promising upside, all while redesigning the defense corps and adding a young premier scoring threat in the NHL.

While the aggressive nature of the moves was necessary to undo some setbacks, the Rangers have navigated this offseason like a team that intends to compete next season.

In a true rebuild, the three first-round picks Drury shipped off since the start of the offseason would be valued at a premium.

But haven't you heard? This is a retool.

"My philosophy and our philosophy was if [a first-round pick] for the right player or players, that are at the right age with the right contract that can help our lineup — not just in the [next] year or two but for a number of years down the road — it would be worth it," Drury said on a Zoom call Thursday afternoon.

"We were also able to acquire at the deadline a first-round pick that's closer to playing, turning pro this year, in [Liam] Greentree. A little later pick in [Jacob] Battaglia and obviously Cole [Beaudoin on Wednesday] is a former first-round pick, so we felt we plugged some holes with not only real players to put on our roster that can play key roles, but also added some other picks and actual draft picks and actual prospects in those players I mentioned."

While they might not make those selections, the Rangers acquired former first-rounders who are much closer to being NHL-ready than any future draft pick likely would be.

Plus, two of three picks are top 10 protected thanks to conditions Drury implemented. If either of the next two seasons go down the drain again, the Rangers — who still have their own firsts in 2027 and 2029 — won't be hindered further by missing out on a high pick.

Drury turned the Rangers' No. 26 pick in last weekend's draft and a top 10 protected 2028 first-rounder into 30-plus-goal scorer Pavel Dorofeyev. He also bolstered the blue line by sending a top 10 protected first-rounder in 2030 to Vancouver for top four defenseman Marcus Pettersson.

"Certainly not going to sit here and say the job's done and complete and move on," Drury said. "We're still tinkering, still looking, and any which way we can help the team between now and

Glass not feeling 'pressure' to turn around

By ANDREW CRANE

The backdrop throughout the morning before Tanner Glass' first news conference as director of player development was fitting. A final day of the Rangers development camp had recently wrapped. Their prospects — from the top ones who will push for NHL spots this season to others who may be a couple of years away — had just filtered off the ice. Head coach Mike Sullivan had been in attendance for the Thursday session at the Tarrytown practice facility, too.

Glass, a Ranger from 2014-17 who skated in 527 NHL games, has been tasked with shaping the potential of those prospects and feeding them to Sullivan, ensuring that they turn into sustainable pieces at the next level, and preventing them from becoming the next flameouts and what-ifs.

The stakes are high as the Rangers retool, with an influx of prospects in exchange for veterans dealt away, but Glass isn't fazed.

"I don't think pressure's the right word," said Glass, who had been an assistant director for the last seven years. "At least, that's not how I look at it. It's exciting for us. When we get guys that are talented, it's exciting."

TANNER GLASS

When Jed Ortmeyer left his director of player development role, president and general manager Chris Drury opted for an in-house promotion. Glass suddenly became a critical piece of their quest to become a contender again. He inherited the Rangers' recent Achilles heel, with a need for at least some of these prospects to fit into their long-term plan.

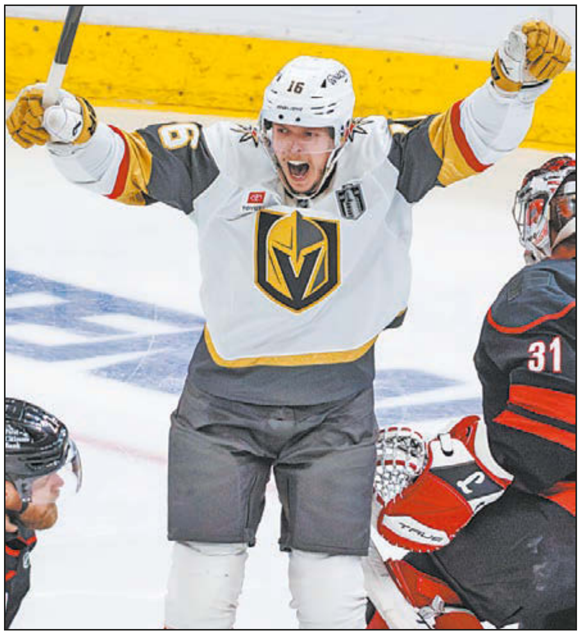
The Rangers' spotty development history looms as Glass' tenure begins. Brennan Othmann was dumped to the Flames in March. Brett Berard was flipped for defensive prospect William Trudeau. Kaapo Kakko and Vitali Kravtsov both underwhelmed before getting traded in past seasons. Alexis Lafrenière hasn't yet turned glimpses of high-end potential into consistency.

The Blueshirts have encountered success stories with Gabe Perreault and Noah Laba, but for the most part, they've stumbled.

Near the end of his playing career, when Glass ended up in the AHL, he thought he made an impact on the younger players. It became something he wanted to do after his playing days ended and prompted his shift toward player development. Initially, that was in an assistant director role with the Rangers before stepping into the main role in May.

So there Glass was Thursday, fielding questions about the collection of defensive talent on display at the prospect camp. There he was, getting asked about top forward prospect Cole Beaudoin — just acquired Wednesday in the Vincent Trocheck deal — and how it sounds like the Rangers "are getting a great player." There he was, raving about No. 5 overall pick in last month's draft Alberts Smits' details that are "probably beyond

TRACK



NOW & LATER: Rangers president and general manager Chris Drury (inset) has been busy this year shipping out veterans to bring in young talent such as Cole Beaudoin (left) and Pavel Dorofeyev, fitting what the executive described during a Thursday Zoom call as a philosophy to acquire players "at the right age with the right contract that can help our lineup — not just in the [next] year or two but for a number of years down the road."

Opening Night, we're going to keep trying."

Deflecting a direct question about how the influx of moves impacts Braden Schneider's status, Drury showered the 24-year-old defenseman with praise but wouldn't say whether he would stick around.

It's possible the changes to the blue line open the door for Schneider to remain here in his usual bottom-pair role. As The Post previously reported, Drury is only looking to trade Schneider if a comparable player/contract is coming back.

Drury acknowledged that reshaping the defense corps was a priority this offseason, noting that he worked to add players who would inject puck-moving ability, cleaner zone exits and stronger neutral zone play into the lineup.

As for No. 5 pick Alberts Smits, who is heading home to Latvia for a bit before he returns to train in New York later this summer, Drury sounded extremely encouraged by what the big-bodied defenseman could be.

"Well, there's not too many kids his age drafted who have played in two different men's pro leagues, Olympics, World Championships," Drury said. "Certainly isn't getting in bigger stages than those events he participated in. We're excited where we got him. ... But with that said, we're going to do right by him and the long-term health and well-being of him as a Ranger. This is not a sprint for him. We hope he's a rock-solid defenseman for the Rangers for the next 15 years. We're not going to put him in positions or situations that he can't handle."

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player development

his years."

There's Liam Greentree, the centerpiece of the return package in the Artemi Panarin trade back in February. There's Jacob Battaglia, the prospect who arrived in March. There are defensemen E.J. Emery, Drew Fortescue and Smits, too. These are the names with whom Glass and his staff will become synonymous, the ones who could alter the Rangers' development trajectory.

Ask Glass about something connected to prospects reaching the NHL or draft decisions, though, and he will deflect. That's not his job, he said as part of his answer on multiple occasions. He's responsible for getting the most out of every prospect. Across the four-day development camp this week, that meant a focus on skills and operating in contested situations.

"The game's getting faster all the time," Glass said, "so there's not a lot of space out there, so we're trying to help the guys navigate those tight spaces and create chances and make plays in traffic. So that's kind of the, I think from a skill perspective, something we tried to instill this week."

This was the foundation: layers of individual attention and position-specific work, with the dividends following in future seasons when those prospects — after development camps and junior seasons and the first tastes of professional life — step into significant NHL roles. That's what the Rangers have been missing. And that's what Glass will need to fix.

"It's a great honor to be doing this," Glass said, "and I feel very fortunate and excited about going forward."

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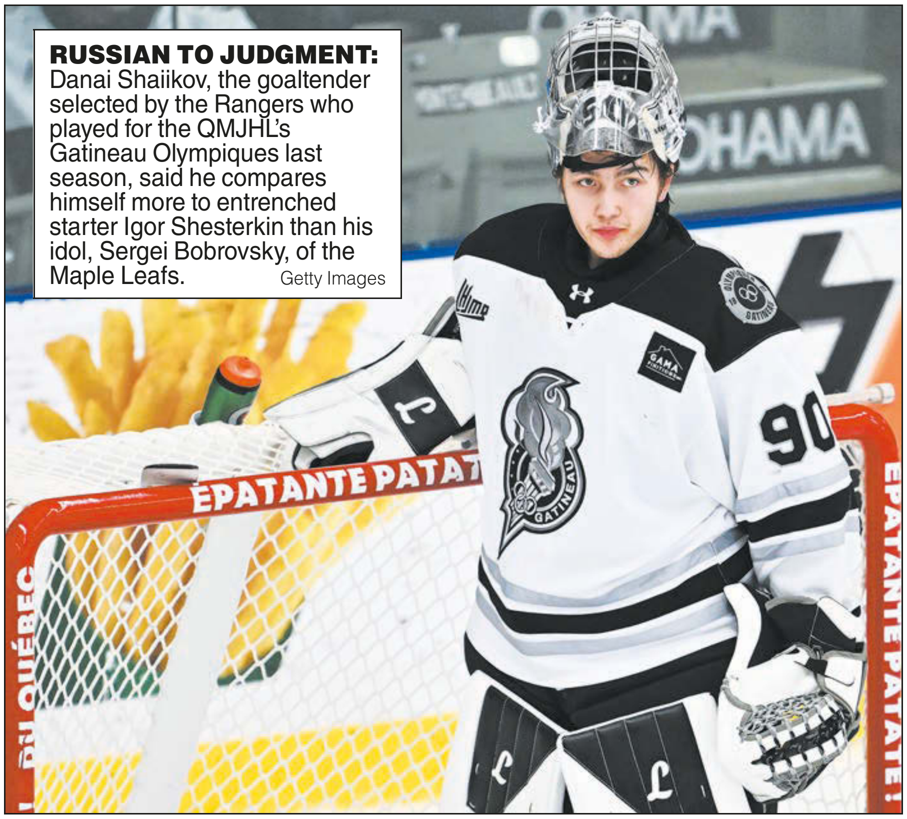

RUSSIAN TO JUDGMENT: Danai Shaiikov, the goaltender selected by the Rangers who played for the QMJHL's Gatineau Olympiques last season, said he compares himself more to entrenched starter Igor Shesterkin than his idol, Sergei Bobrovsky, of the Maple Leafs. Getty Images

Goalie prospect Shaiikov gets post-bathroom shock

By ANDREW CRANE

RANGERS NOTES

Danai Shaiikov didn't know what had happened.

While watching the NHL draft Saturday at a hotel in Miami — the city where he had been for a predraft showcase conducted by his agents, he said — he stepped away to the bathroom during the third round. When he returned, everyone started clapping and looking at him.

The 19-year-old goaltender from Kazakhstan, who played for the Gatineau Olympiques in the QMJHL last season, was surprised the Rangers grabbed him with the No. 67 overall pick. Shaiikov knew he'd get drafted, but he thought it'd be later. It validated his decision to jump from Russia to Quebec last season. Shaiikov said he wanted to play in North America to help achieve his goal of reaching the NHL after not getting drafted during his first year of eligibility.

"It's a good moment for me and for my family, for like all my former coaches," Shaiikov, the Rangers' first goaltender drafted since Talyn Boyko in 2021, said Thursday after the final day of development camp in Tarrytown. "But real work starts now for me. It's like a lot of work ahead of me, so yeah, nothing changed. It's good, but it's just one day of good like memories and everything."

In predraft interviews, Shaiikov said new Maple Leafs goaltender Sergei Bobrovsky is his idol but that he compares himself more to Rangers star Igor Shesterkin. The season in Quebec — when he logged 50 games and finished with a .903 save percentage and a 2.78 goals-against average — forced him to adjust to a quicker pace on a smaller rink, with more dangerous chances unfolding each game. Shaiikov's goalie coach helped him change some "structure things," he said, and it helped him adapt.

"Small details," Shaiikov said, "but it's important details."

Rangers director of player personnel and director of amateur scouting John Lilley said goalie scout Scott Clemmensen pushed to draft Shaiikov. He will play again for Gatineau in 2026-27, but down the road, once his juniors career is over, Shaiikov could factor into the organizational depth — with goaltenders Hugo Ollas (ECHL last season) and Boyko (Liiga in Finland and AHL Hartford) both not receiving qualifying offers last week.

Still entrenched atop the depth chart is Shesterkin, with whom Shaiikov hasn't yet spoken but would "of course" consider a cool moment if he does. The Rangers backup situation became complicated with the acquisition of Joonas Korpisalo and the presence of Dylan Garand. But Shaiikov could carve out a role somewhere in the organization once he eventually turns pro.

"I'm just happy to be here," Shaiikov said. "It's an honor to be in such a legendary organization."

➤ The Rangers signed defenseman **Dennis Cholowski** and forward **Glenn Gawdin** to two-year contracts Thursday. Cholowski, 28, has skated in 173 games, including 17 with the Devils last season. Gawdin, 29, finished with 51 points in 71 games for AHL Ontario during the 2025-26 campaign.

IDEAS MAN

SUMMER TO-DO LIST: Coach Pete DeBoer (above) is making plans for the 2026-27 NHL season, his first full year at the helm of the Islanders. One idea he's had is possibly playing star defenseman Matthew Schaefer (inset) on the right side. Corey Sipkin; Heather Khalifa

Islanders coach mulling some changes for returning stars

By ALEX MITCHELL

Matthew Schaefer's getting a shake-up.

Islanders head coach Pete DeBoer plans to expand the defenseman's versatility in his sophomore season by moving the young phenom around the blue line.

"I think Schaefer is an option on the right side," DeBoer said of the lefty-shooting Calder Memorial Trophy winner.

Schaefer played predominantly on the left side during his rookie campaign, with the exception of three late-season games when Ryan Pulock was out of the lineup.

"I think in our system everybody's interchangeable ... where we're interchangeable, that allows us to put pressure on the puck," the coach added.

DeBoer, who replaced Patrick Roy at the helm with four games left in the team's late-season spiral out of playoff contention, added that he's looking at offensive weapon Mat Barzal to play center this upcoming season.

"I think Barzy wants to play center," DeBoer said. "I think he's excited about it. He's embracing it, and I think that makes us a better team if he's there."

"I like that speed down the middle," the coach added, likening the fast-lane approach to what brought success to the Stanley Cup-winning Carolina Hurricanes, as well as to their finals opponent, the Vegas Golden Knights.

The start of free agency made DeBoer's settling into his first offseason with the Islanders an even greater challenge. Longtime captain Anders Lee left the team Wednesday for a three-year, $16.2 million deal with the Mammoth.

"I don't think I remember a time — the Islanders without Anders Lee in the lineup," DeBoer said of the forward who debuted with the team in 2012 and was named captain in 2018.

"My wish is that Anders goes on and has career years in Utah, and helps them. I'm sure he will," he added of Lee, who helped carry the team to back-to-back Eastern Conference finals in 2020 and 2021.

Islanders defenseman Isaiah George told The Post that "it sucks to see him go" and that the beloved and community-oriented Lee was "just a great guy."

"You can ask anyone, just a super thoughtful, great man in terms of getting everyone involved, making it feel like a true team," George said.

"Then obviously on the ice, I think his play speaks for itself. He was a leader by example of how hard he played, how hard he worked," added George, who's been splitting his time between the Islanders and Bridgeport of the AHL since 2024.

DeBoer isn't rushing into naming a replacement captain.

"I was hoping we wouldn't be at this spot, so it's kind of one of those things where you don't think about it until you have to," he said. "I guess we'll start having to now."

The coach is still getting to know his roster and said he recently had face time "just talking hockey" with Barzal and Long Island native Kyle Palmieri, a forward the Islanders lost to an ACL injury last November.

DeBoer said his goal is to "give everyone a fair opportunity as much as we can, without costing us hockey games," but still cited expectations for Anthony Duclair, the forward who had 27 points in 62 games last season.

"I've seen the best of Duclair when he's in Florida, putting up almost 60 points," DeBoer said of the athlete who had a contentious relationship with Roy at the end of 2024.

"I've also seen the other seasons where he hasn't. So he's got to come with that — with his best game and bring it to the rink every day."

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Global star Kerr says Gotham FC a perfect fit

By JONATHAN LEHMAN

The NWSL is where Sam Kerr made her reputation as one of the preeminent forwards in women's soccer history.

She played in the league's debut season in 2013 as a teenager, played three seasons for Gotham FC in its earlier incarnation as Sky Blue and left the U.S. in 2019 with two MVP awards and the league's all-time scoring record — before going on to greater global stardom with perennial English champions Chelsea and Team Australia.

SAM KERR
Back in NWSL

But as the 32-year-old said Thursday, Day 1 of a contract she signed with Gotham that runs through 2030, "I always had a desire to come back to the NWSL." And when she made up her mind to depart Chelsea this summer, "It was really the only league I saw myself in."

Kerr had several suitors in the NWSL, she said, and the "really difficult" multi-month recruitment process "came down to the little things that were important to me."

"Sam could have played for any club in the world, and she chose Gotham," president of soccer operations Yael Averbuch West said.

So why Gotham? Let's fire off some reasons, like so many shots on goal from the striker who will be eligible to debut in the team's July 15 match at Citi Field:

- The team's ambitions. "Gotham is probably the most similar club to Chelsea in their desires and what they want from a season," Kerr said, describing the 2023 and 2025 NWSL champions and inaugural CONCACAF W Champions Cup winners as "a club that is always aspiring to win something, win the game, win whatever trophy they can."
- The roster. "It helps that they have some of the best players in the league," Kerr said. She called star midfielder Rose Lavelle "one of the key players I thought that I would love to play with." Averbuch West said there have been meetings to discuss how Kerr will fit with incumbent center forward Esther González.
- The coach. Kerr "heard really good things" about Juan Carlos Amorós. "When I spoke to him, he impressed me tactically," she said. "When you play in a team that creates a lot of goal-scoring opportunities, as a nine [striker], that's the No. 1 thing that you want."
- The GM's pitch. "A lot of credit has to go to Yael because she did a lot of work to get me here," Kerr said. Averbuch West described nearly six months of "a lot of phone calls with me and her agent."

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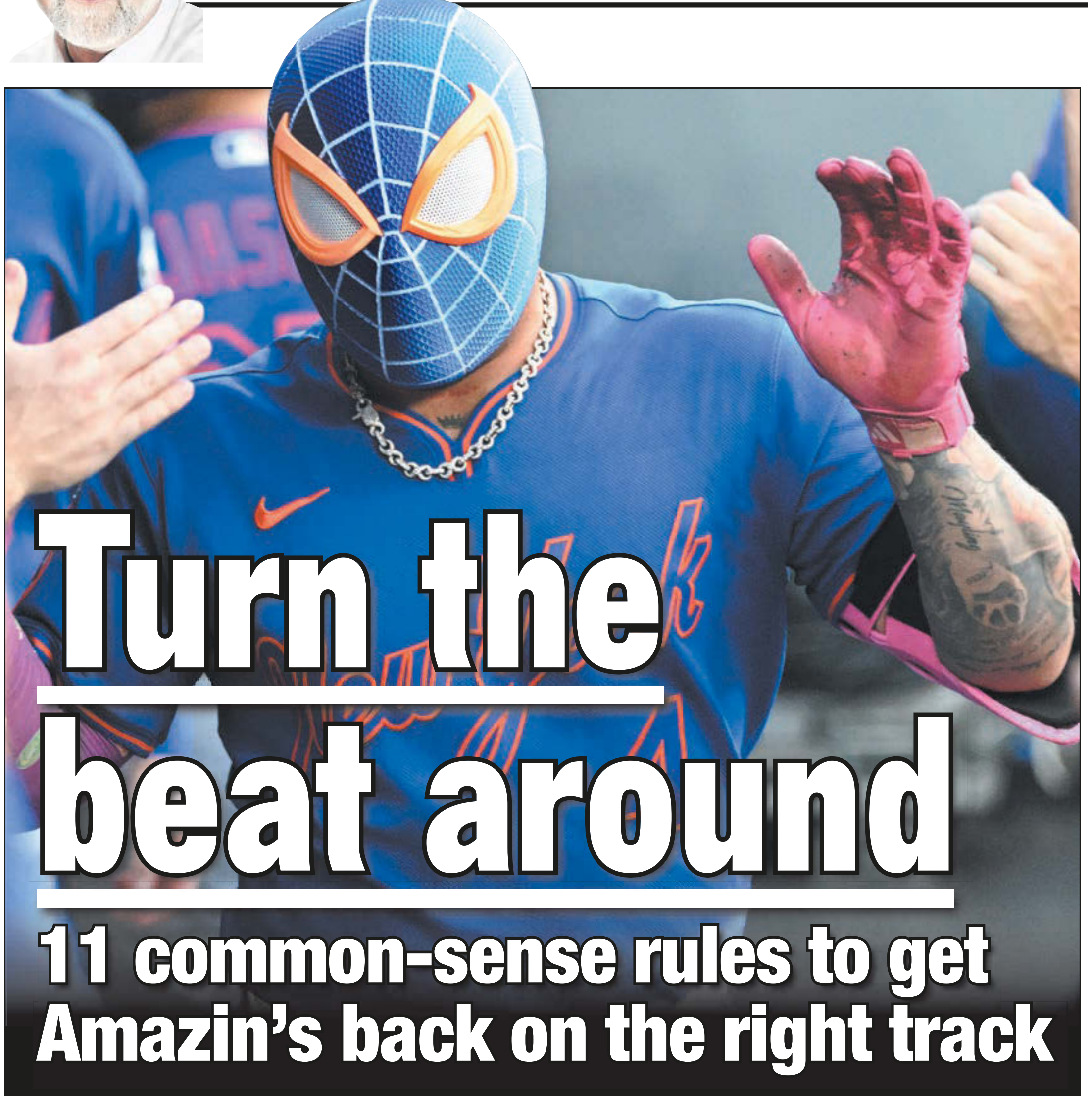
Phil Mushnick

EQUAL TIME

Turn the beat around

11 common-sense rules to get Amazin's back on the right track



IT MAKES NO (SPIDEY) SENSE: If Phil Mushnick took the reins as Mets manager, one of the first things he would do would be banning silly celebrations — such as wearing a Spider-Man mask. Imagn Images

BACK WHEN Al Alburquerque — known only to Mike Francesa as "Alberto" — roamed the American League, callers to Francesa's show would bust his sanctimonious chops by setting him up to reveal both his imperial arrogance and know-it-all ignorance.

One afternoon, a caller asked if he'd be willing to manage the slumping Yankees. Not realizing — or unable to realize — that he'd been presented a banana peel on which to step, Francesa answered, "Yes," then added, "but the money has to be right."

He was serious. After all, he once fancied himself the soon-to-be-named GM of the Jets, now that they were in the hands of ex-pal Bill Parcells. Recall the official Jets team jacket Francesa modeled when seen in "my usual" front-row and finish-line seats.

So, as Lafayette, the young French Revolutionary War general, chose as his Latin motto, *Cur non?* — Why not?

So I've thrown my feather-plumed hat into the ring as the next manager of the moribund New York Mets. What's more, I'll do it for next to nothing, just the price of this singular column.

But I'll come with simple-to-follow rules that highly paid professionals will not be burdened to adopt. Here goes:

1. Grow up. Show up serious, stay serious, prepared to win. There will be no more childish, rehearsed dugout or on-field demonstrations posed as natural celebrations, until the final out of winning games.

That means no more silly hat- or mask-wearing following home runs, regardless of the score. All Halloween garb will be banned from the dugout. That such items are carried then worn by the team misses the larger point of being professionals prepared to win, not prepared to perform as clowns.

There is ample time for the team to celebrate — no tired, and occasionally dangerous Gatorade dumps needed, wanted or allowed — after the *team* wins.

2. Mets fortunate enough to hit a double will no longer signal their self-approval with worthless gestures in return for similarly worthless gestures from the dugout.

Upon reaching second, Mets *must* be aware of all game circumstances, including the score, the inning, the number of outs, the batter, the pitcher's and catcher's ability and inclination to try to pick off runners at second, the positions of the outfielders and their individual arm strengths, and the positioning of the infielders.

Mets base runners will no longer be a base short, including home plate, of where they should practically be and so often go to die.

3. The home-run-or-strikeout epidemic must end. Batters with two strikes must choke up, shorten their swings and optimize their ability to make contact rather than trudge back to the dugout in self-defeat.

Stop guessing on two-strike pitches. Be prepared for any pitch, including waste pitches thrown high or in the dirt. And stop taking first pitches thrown down the middle as the pitcher wishes to get ahead in the count, from where he can toy with the batter.

4. Mets designated hitters must have a batting average that indicates they can hit. They must provide evidence that they keep their heads still and swings level in order to best hit the ball. It's designated *hitter,* not swinger!

5. You have friends on the opposing teams? Make nice before and after games, not during them. Francisco Lindor has made second base a welcome wagon for opponents, smiling, laughing, slapping each other on the back, when he should be preparing for the next batter.

Lindor, like jogging Robinson Canó, is good in the clubhouse? Which one?

6. Ditch tried-and-failed analytics in favor of the here-and-now. If a reliever goes 1-2-3 on nine pitches, consider that he's "on" — even the best pitchers have bad days — and leave him be rather than trying to improve on perfect.

Relievers are, for the most part, former starters, beginning in high school. There's no sound reason to think they can't pitch two innings.

7. Every player in the lineup should have the ability to lay down a bunt. If not, they must practice it during, of all crazy times, practice.

That the Mets are another team that doesn't take full advantage of this extra-inning automatic runner at second defies sense.

Being prepared to win ballgames beyond foolishly limited starting pitching and one-trick slugging will allow a team, what, five or six, or more wins per season? Well, five more is a 10-game swing.

8. Take nothing for granted! I don't care if you make 70 cents or $750 million, if you don't run to first base — amputees excluded — you don't play for Mushnick's Mets.

Sunday, the Mets' TV crew praised carefree and careless Juan Soto for his sudden active interest in playing the outfield. Thus, at $765 million he hadn't previously done so. Hooray for Juan!

The next day, Soto showed total disregard for what should have been an easily fielded single to left that escaped his glove then bounced to the wall — Soto in jogging, carefree pursuit. The Jays' batter, George Springer, leading off the bottom of the first, was given magnanimous credit for a triple, scoring on the play due to an error assigned to hustling center fielder A.J. Ewing, who can't yet afford to loaf.

The Mets' TV crew should have roasted Soto, who often chooses to loaf to first base, head down, rather than reach safely upon seeing the ball misplayed by an infielder. Should his contract be revised upwards to include non-hustling clauses?

Gary Cohen, Ron Darling and Keith Hernandez rarely choose to simply ignore such minimalism in the Mets, yet they too often let it pass as if it's an anomaly.

Word of what's said about them in team TV and radio booths rapidly spreads to the players; thus, what's the worst that could happen? Embarrassed Mets play harder, better, then *blame* the TV booth for their improvement?

These three men know good from bad, bad from worse. So do we, their audience. So give the Mets hell! Shellack them with the unvarnished truth! Players are sensitive to criticism? Good! So avoid legit criticisms!

Oh, and catch all fly balls with both hands. You drop one or two a year catching just with your glove, not guarding against a flub? That's one or two too many, and perhaps another difference between winning and losing.

9. Cease signing fill-a-need vets with little or no promise of repeating their best year. Luis Robert Jr., annually broken at 28, has been a predictable waste of $20 million. Wouldn't Brandon Nimmo or even Harrison Bader have better served these Mets?

Why was second baseman Marcus Semien, 35, at $26 million per year deemed expendable by Texas? Think before you plug a leak with a wet paper towel!

10. Back up all fielders. The Mets regularly feature leave-me-out-of-this loiterers. Huascar Brazobán, an MLB pitcher since 2022, doesn't yet know to back up the catcher on a throw home? He has something better to do?

11. No more head-first, injured list here-we-come sliding. Slide with your legs — and learn the best anticipated side of the base to target, especially to home, where a teammate should be — *must be* — assisting with arm signals.

So whattya think? Any of these listed rules strike you as nonsense? Impossible to demand let alone enact?

We'll replace Mr. Met with a Marquis de Lafayette mascot. *Cur non?*, baby.

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CLIFF' NEEDS A LIFT: Ryan Clifford is the lone Mets representative for this year's All-Star Futures Game, though he does so while sporting a batting average under .200 at Triple-A Syracuse. Corey Sipkin

CROP DUST

Not all doom & gloom amid Mets farm system struggles

By MARK W. SANCHEZ

Wednesday represented an annual moment of hope around baseball as the All-Star Futures Game rosters were announced, a chance to honor and highlight the youngest, best and brightest from each organization.

The Mets' lone representative, while a high-upside slugger in Ryan Clifford, is hitting under .200.

It has been that kind of season for the Mets, whose struggles have not been limited to Queens. Their farm system, if not the outright disaster that the major league club has been, has nonetheless disappointed, particularly in comparison to a 2025 campaign filled with revelations.

"We've had regression in our farm system," Steve Cohen acknowledged on "The Show with Joel Sherman and Jon Heyman" this week. "Now, I'm told that development isn't linear, OK? It isn't like some straight line where everything goes up."

He is correct on both fronts. A system that took steps last season has been stagnant, and such letdowns are not stunning or unique in a fickle sport filled with injury and uneven development.

Much of the same Mets people and processes remain in place from the past few seasons, even if the results from the past three months of minor league games have been dramatically different.

The regression is real, but that in itself is not necessarily a sign of glaring problems as one sifts through the farm system.

Discouraging

Several of the system's top pitching prospects have returned to earth.

- Jonah Tong, who was the best minor league pitcher in baseball in 2025, has seen his minor league ERA balloon from 1.43 to 5.95. He has walked 5.5 hitters per nine innings while still searching for a third reliable pitch.

Last year, Tong could dominate with a fastball and changeup and barely had to think on the mound. This year, he has made his curveball a focus and has added a cutter, and the results have reflected that he is still learning to pitch. It was unfortunate for the 2026 Mets that Tong could not help sooner, but much of his prospect shine remains.

- Jack Wenninger, Tong's teammate at Triple-A Syracuse, appeared to be on the verge of a promotion in owning a 1.08 ERA through seven starts. In his past eight, the ERA has swelled to 6.49.

The 24-year-old righty's stuff had declined, but the Mets believe he has regained some velocity and movement recently. Now he needs to find his command again.

- Will Watson, another promising starter, has been sidelined by an oblique strain since May 5. The righty is on track to return in the second half.

Several of the system's higher-up hitting prospects have stalled.

- Clifford, a first baseman/corner outfielder, appeared to be on the upswing through May, when he had clubbed 13 home runs and owned a .790 OPS as a 22-year-old in Syracuse.

But a dreadful June — hitting .099 with a .355 OPS and striking out 39 times in 93 plate appearances — reminded that his swing-and-miss issues remain severe.

- Jacob Reimer, a corner infielder who impressed at High-A Brooklyn and Double-A Binghamton last year (combined .870 OPS), entered Thursday with a .723 OPS with Binghamton.

He has battled injuries, including a groin issue, that may partially explain the downturn, and the Mets have been happy with his progress defensively at third.

Understandable

The Mets farm system was probably going to slide regardless.

- Ten prospects were used to bring in Tyler Rogers, Ryan Helsley, Gregory Soto and Cedric Mullins at last year's trade deadline, then top 100 prospects Jett Williams and Brandon Sproat became the price for Freddy Peralta. This season, Carson Benge, A.J. Ewing, Nolan McLean and arguably Christian Scott have removed themselves from the ranks of the prospects and established themselves as legitimate big league pieces.

In March, MLB Pipeline ranked the Mets system as seventh best. The next edition of rankings will be less kind. The goal is to win games rather than winning over analysts, even if the Mets have done neither.

"I don't think from a rankings perspective we're going to be anywhere near where we were last year," Andy Green, the senior vice president of baseball development now moonlighting as interim manager, said recently. "That's not what we're solving for here."

Last year would have been difficult to replicate.

Among the prospects whose values skyrocketed in 2025 were Wenninger (sixth-round pick in 2023), Zach Thornton (fifth-round pick in 2023), Watson (seventh-round pick in 2024), R.J. Gordon (13th-round pick in 2024) and the since-traded Frank Elissalt (19th-round pick in 2024).

It is difficult to consistently hit on mid- and late-round selections.

Encouraging

Some of the most exciting position players are developing, even if they are further down the system.

- Elian Peña, who signed for $5 million in January 2025, has held his own as an 18-year-old at Single-A St. Lucie while never taking an at-bat against a younger pitcher. Peña entered Thursday hitting .261 with a .753 OPS and nearly as many walks (50) as strikeouts (58).

Arguably the most encouraging aspect of Peña's game has been his defense, showing excellent range at shortstop after plenty of whispers that he would grow too slow for the spot.

- Mitch Voit, last year's first-round pick, scuffled in Brooklyn through April and May before taking off in June, when he slashed .305/.426/.476. He entered play Thursday with 26 steals in 60 games.

Like Peña, Voit entered the Mets system with defensive questions — the organization knew he could play several infield positions but wondered about shortstop — and like Peña, he has impressed at short.

- It is possible the prospect with the loudest tools in the entire system just debuted. Wandy Asigen, a 16-year-old shortstop whom the Mets poached from the Yankees for $3.9 million, began play Monday in the Dominican Summer League after getting past a hamstring injury.

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ON DECK

at Braves

Friday, 7:15 p.m.,
PIX11, WHSQ (880 AM)

RHP Christian Scott

2026 stats:
2-0, 3.20 ERA

Career vs. ATL:
0-1, 4.50 ERA

Last start:
Sat., vs. PHI;
4.1 IP, 2 ER, 6 K

PITCH BREAKDOWN

50%	23%	17%
4-Seamer	Sweeper	Cutter

RHP Grant Holmes

2026 stats:
4-4, 3.96 ERA

Career vs. NYM:
0-1, 2.00 ERA

Last start:
Sat., at SF;
4 IP, 1 H, 0 ER

PITCH BREAKDOWN

39%	32%	10%
Slider	4-Seamer	Sinker

UP NEXT

SATURDAY: at Braves,
8:08 p.m., Fox, WHSQ
LHP Sean Manaea
vs. LHP Chris Sale

SUNDAY: at Braves,
12:30 p.m., NBC, WHSQ
RHP Nolan McLean
vs. LHP Martín Pérez

INJURY REPORT

■ **Dedniel Núñez** (Tommy John surgery recovery) has begun climbing his way back to the majors. The hard-throwing righty allowed three runs (one earned) in two appearances with Low-A St. Lucie before his rehab assignment was transferred to Double-A Binghamton on Thursday.

Jon Heyman
INSIDE MLB
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Green stay?

Interim manager could prove to be long-term answer despite plan

Andy Green

Getty Images

METS baseball president David Stearns announced that interim manager Andy Green will return to the front office following the season and a managerial search will commence. But I'm not completely convinced.

I believe Stearns believes that's what he will do. But things change. Things changed with Carlos Mendoza. Things can change with Green.

Others within the Mets hierarchy use less certain words like "expectation" and "plan" regarding Green resuming farm-directing duties. What if Green does a terrific job? I know that won't be easy — 14 Mets have a 0.0 WAR or worse — but with pressure reduced, maybe they're better.

Green was an MLB manager (from 2016-19 with the Padres), which should be close to a requirement for the most difficult job in sports. Plus, he has a strong rapport with Stearns and fits the lower-key, lower-profile persona many young leaders prefer. Some insiders guess Stearns might shy away from a big presence like Albert Pujols and maybe even Alex Cora. Recall Stearns never seriously considered a Buck Showalter return.

Green might fit as well as anyone. He also obviously has executive experience front offices often prefer, and he received frequent praise for his efforts last year (though Mets owner Steve Cohen lamented the farm system's regression this year on "The Show" podcast).

Green turned down interviews for the Orioles job and other managerial openings. He lives with his close-knit family in Nashville, but he does seem to enjoy his new role.

Here are our early odds for the full-time Mets manager. (Not for betting purposes!)

1. Green. Odds: 4-1

2. Carlos Beltrán, Mets consultant: Word is he didn't want the job — at least while he's enjoying his Hall of Fame year. He wanted it once. **Odds:** 8-1

3. Alex Cora, ex-Red Sox manager: This would be a home run. He didn't want the Phillies job while he focuses on his family, but maybe this timing is better. **Odds: 10-1**

4. David Ross, ex-Cubs manager: Ross, who told The Post's Dan Martin he's interested, was doing a solid job in Chicago (with Green as bench coach) before being shockingly replaced by Stearns' old Brewers manager, Craig Counsell. **Odds:** 20-1

5. Rocco Baldelli, ex-Twins manager: He made the playoffs three times and is now working in the Dodgers front office, where maybe he picked up extra pointers. **Odds:** 25-1

6. Brandon Hyde, ex-Orioles manager: He led Baltimore to the playoffs twice. **Odds:** 30-1

7. Albert Pujols, all-time great: He already said on MLB Network he's interested. He received rave reviews managing the Dominican WBC team. **Odds:** 35-1

8. Walker McKinven, White Sox bench coach: He's part of a South Side miracle and was a strategy coach under Stearns in Milwaukee. **Odds:** 40-1

9. Ryan Flaherty, Cubs bench coach: Well-regarded Vanderbilt man whose time is coming. **Odds:** 60-1

10. Joe Girardi, ex-Yankees, Phillies and Marlins manager: Maybe Northwestern Joe's no-nonsense brand is what's needed. **Odds:** 75-1

11. J.D. Martinez, Mets hitting guru: Hitting savant was the soul of the surprise 2024 Mets. **Odds:** 80-1

12. Phil Nevin, ex-Angels manager: Tough guy who might handle a tough job. **Odds:** 85-1

13. George Lombard, Tigers bench coach: Beloved coach best known for raising two great young players. **Odds:** 90-1

14. Brad Ausmus, Yankees bench coach: Two-time MLB manager is an Ivy Leaguer (Dartmouth), like Stearns and Cohen. **Odds:** 95-1

15. Luis Rojas, Yankees 3B coach: He did it once so that probably rules him out, but he's ready now. **Odds:** 100-1

16. James Rowson, Yankees hitting coach: He was a finalist in Minnesota last year. **Odds:** 125-1

17. A.J. Hinch, Tigers manager: The excellent manager has a contract through next year, but you never know. Overlapped with Stearns in Houston. **Odds:** 150-1

18. Bobby Valentine, ex-Mets, Rangers and Chiba Lotte manager: I can dream, can't I? A brilliant baseball guy, and importantly, great with the media. **Odds:** 200-1

19. David Wright, Mets great: He's never shown interest. **Odds:** 250-1

20. Kai Correa, Mets bench coach: He knows the game but can't be elevated after this mess. **Odds:** 500-1

21. Field: Could be a surprise. Did anyone guess Blake Butera (who's killing it in D.C.)? Or Tony Vitello jumping from college to the Giants? **Odds:** 3-1

Cohen helped mend fences

METS owner **Steve Cohen's** suggestion on "The Show" podcast that the **Juan Soto-Francisco Lindor** rift isn't an issue anymore was seen by many as some sort of revelation or even admission that there ever was a rift.

But the superstar fissure was known to everyone around the team. It's fair to call it an open secret.

Our Mike Puma wrote about it last year, but that was rare, apparently leaving Mets fans to dream that they are besties despite widespread whispers.

There's a long history of superstar conflict on championship teams, making it far from unique.

And maybe things are better, as Cohen suggested.

Soto and Lindor are both nice guys, though one's an introvert (Soto) and one an extrovert (Lindor). It isn't known why a distance developed, but it's undeniable that it did, even if it was a low-key standoff (they didn't fight but rarely spoke).

According to other MLB sources, Cohen even called the star pair together to try to hash it out at some point.

Maybe that worked.

Or maybe Soto's locker being moved to the other end of the clubhouse in both Port St. Lucie and Queens worked. The reason for the moves is unspoken but curious.

In any case, Cohen gets credit here for addressing the issue — or former issue.

Angels have pieces to sell

ANGELS left-hander **Reid Detmers** could become a huge trade target if owner **Arte Moreno** allows interim GM **John Mozeliak** to make trades.

The just-fired GM **Perry Minasian** was disallowed by the uber-reluctant Moreno from making many franchise-altering trades for **Shohei Ohtani** before Moreno decided not to accept Ohtani's gift of an offer to stay with that same 97 percent deferred $700M deal.

Minasian was routinely prevented from making deals. As an example, even utility player **Luis Rengifo** was once considered untouchable, according to rival GMs.

Detmers (3.88 ERA, 112 K's) could be a huge trade piece. And **José Soriano** (3.42, 111) might be, too. ...

Tarik Skubal will be the star of the trade deadline, but another trio of hot starters could also spice things up: Sonny Gray, Robbie Ray and Trevor Rogers.

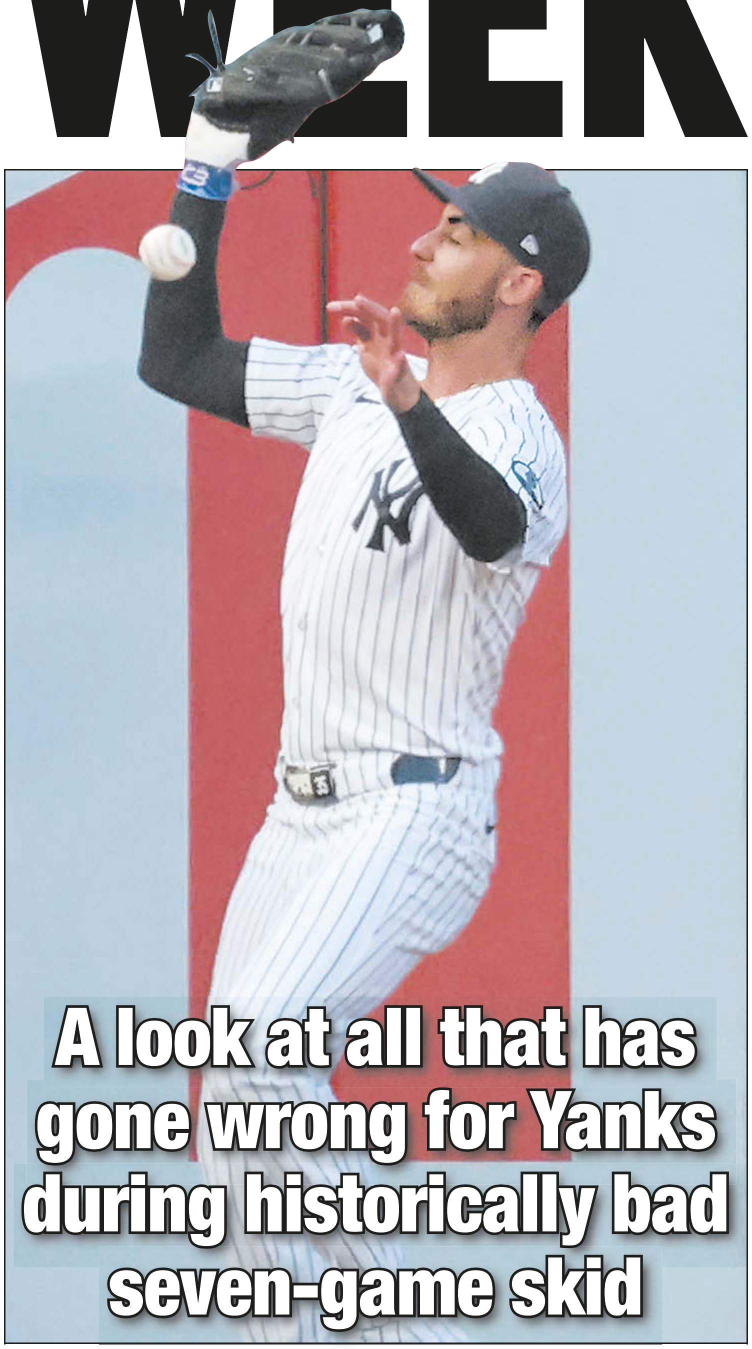
The Red Sox seem resistant to sell with their excellent rotation, and Gray has a full no-trade clause. But he'd likely accept a deal to the right contender.

The Orioles are also on the fence, but Rogers will be a free agent, so there is a decent chance he's dealt.

Ray will be a free agent, too, and the Giants are a rare certain seller. So he should go.

HELL WEEK

A look at all that has gone wrong for Yanks during historically bad seven-game skid



AS BAD AS IT GETS: So much has gone awry for the Yankees during their seven-game skid, from a lineup with Jasson Domínguez (near right) and Ben Rice (far right) in a team-wide slump, the defense committing 10 errors, including one by Cody Bellinger (middle) and a pitching staff, including possible All-Star Game starter Cam Schlittler, that has lost its way.

Charles Wenzelberg/ NY Post (2); Robert Sabo; Imagn Images

By GREG JOYCE

Had a team ever needed an off day more than the Yankees?

If nothing else, just to ensure that they could not inflict more damage on themselves while trying yet again to end a losing streak that now stands at seven games?

Sometimes when a team is in the depths of despair, it wants to get back on the field as soon as possible to try to climb out of it. The Yankees keep attempting that and it has only gotten worse, so Thursday they had what Aaron Boone described as "a day to refresh the body and mind."

There may be no better slump buster than the Twins arriving in town Friday, though if the Yankees losing streak somehow reaches eight against their perennial punching bags, the panic may reach an all-time high.

"Ten more [games] before the [All-Star] break," Cody Bellinger said. "Hopefully we get rolling."

Before then, here are the five biggest areas of concern from an absolutely brutal week in Yankee land:

Lineup lacks punch

There is plenty of blame to go around for the terrible week, but first and foremost, the Aaron Judge-less offense has been the most responsible. During the seven-game skid, they have combined to hit just .137 (31-for-226) with a paltry .191 on-base percentage and .230 slugging percentage.

Their .421 OPS is the worst in any single seven-game stretch in franchise history.

Yes, losing Judge to the injured list hurts, but this is more than that — this is almost every hitter on the roster slumping at the same time.

"I feel like right now, collectively guys are just trying to do too much, trying to be the one guy that will hit the grand slam with nobody on," Judge said. "It's like, 'Hey, just take your approach, take your at-bat.' "

The Yankees have been even worse against starting pitchers in particular. They have faced some tough arms, but those starters have combined to give up just five runs (four earned) and 22 base runners (14 hits, seven walks, one hit batter) with 54 strikeouts in 46 innings. The Yankees have hit a putrid .093 with a .311 OPS against them.

Stars shooting blanks

Ben Rice and Cody Bellinger will likely be named All-Stars with Judge on Saturday, but they certainly haven't played like it over the past week. With Judge on the IL for the foreseeable future, the Yankees need Rice and Bellinger to hit like they are capable of — which they did earlier in June when Judge first went down, only to go ice-cold at the same time.

Rice is 2-for-25 during the losing streak while Bellinger is 1-for-23 with two walks.

"Missing my pitches and then swinging at some pitcher's pitches," Bellinger said. "I got to be better. I just got to continue working and continue to trust myself and trust my plan."

Poor defense

Among the more stupefying stats of the skid: The Yankees have scored as many runs as they have given up unearned runs: 17.

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Officially, they have committed 10 errors — two by Austin Wells (catcher interference each time), two by José Caballero (one at second base, one at third) and one each by Bellinger, Amed Rosario, Oswaldo Cabrera, Ali Sánchez, Yerry De los Santos and Cam Schlittler — along with a handful of additional defensive miscues, all for a unit that had taken decent care of the ball before this stretch.

Part of the problem is the absence of Trent Grisham and Ryan McMahon — both are expected to be activated off the IL Friday — which has forced some guys to play at positions they are less comfortable with.

"We haven't done a good job of that this week," Boone said. "Even with some of the guys out, we should still be better at that."

Cracks in the rotation?

The last time the Yankees finished an inning with a lead came in the fourth inning last Thursday in Boston. Since then, along with not scoring enough, they have been falling behind early and having to play uphill.

This does not yet rise to the level of concern as the rest of this list, but the rotation has had some clunkers over the past week, including Schlittler, who may start the All-Star Game for the AL. The stud right-hander needs to make sure it was just a blip and not a sign of anything else to come as his innings mount. Same goes for Gerrit Cole, who enters Friday's start having pitched to a 6.12 ERA in June.

Rays rising back up

The seven-game losing streak has coincided with a seven-game Rays winning streak that they brought into Thursday night, turning a three-game Yankees lead into a 3.5-game deficit atop the AL East.

The teams have a four-game showdown next week at Tropicana Field, where the Yankees will need to play better to make up some ground.

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INJURY REPORT

- **Trent Grisham** (right hamstring strain) played in a rehab game Wednesday night with Double-A Somerset, going 1-for-3 with a walk and a double, keeping him in line to be activated Friday.
- **Ryan McMahon** (peritonsillar abscess) is expected to join Grisham on the active roster after spending the minimum 10 days on the IL.

ON DECK

vs. Twins

Friday, 7:05 p.m., YES, WFAN (660 AM, 101.9 FM)

RHP Gerrit Cole

2026 stats:
2-3, 4.06 ERA

Career vs. MIN:
5-0, 2.43 ERA

Last start:
Saturday at BOS; 5.1 IP, 7 H, 4 ER

PITCH BREAKDOWN

43%	18%	15%
4-Seamer	Slider	Curve

RHP Mike Paredes

2026 stats:
0-1, 4.26 ERA

Career vs. NYY:
First start

Last start:
Saturday, vs. COL; 5.1 IP, 8 H, 3 ER

PITCH BREAKDOWN

40%	23%	21%
4-Seamer	Change	Sweeper

UP NEXT

SATURDAY: vs. Twins, 1:35 p.m., YES, WFAN
LHP Carlos Rodón vs. RHP Zebby Matthews

SUNDAY: vs. Twins, 1:35 p.m., NBCSN, WFAN
LHP Ryan Weathers vs. RHP Joe Ryan

Flamethrower Lagrange hits IL at Triple-A

By GREG JOYCE

YANKEES NOTES

The Yankees' hopes of calling up Carlos Lagrange as a bullpen weapon in the second half have hit a potential snag.

The top prospect landed on the seven-day injured list Thursday at Triple-A with a shoulder injury, a source told The Post. Lagrange is scheduled for an MRI to determine what he is dealing with and how long he may be out.

The flame-throwing right-hander was in the midst of a transition from starter to reliever, which the Yankees put into motion at the beginning of June to see if he could impact the big league bullpen later in the season.

Lagrange last pitched Sunday, throwing on two days' rest, when he gave up five runs on four hits and two walks in two-thirds of an inning. He threw 20 pitches in the outing and averaged 98.8 mph on his fastball, topping out at 100.9 mph.

It was his seventh relief appearance and second time throwing on two days' rest, as the Yankees had carefully scaled down his workload over the course of the month.

The 23-year-old had made a strong impression on teammates and coaches this spring in his first big league camp, consistently hitting triple digits with his fastball.

➤ They are not saviors, but **Trent Grisham** and **Ryan McMahon**'s expected return to the Yankees on Friday should at least offer some version of a life raft for a team that has spent the past week sinking.

Grisham and McMahon are set to be activated off the injured list ahead of a series against the Twins at Yankee Stadium, getting back two players that should help steady things at least defensively.

"Hopefully they're a part of the equation [of getting back on track], absolutely," manager Aaron Boone said. "Add some length to things. I think when you get guys back in the mix, then all of a sudden guys start slotting in a little bit more where they should be and you get more threats at different spots. So hopefully that's something that'll be a good thing for us."

Grisham played in a rehab game Wednesday night, while McMahon, after dealing with food poisoning Wednesday, did not play in one Thursday, as the club had initially planned.

Grisham, who landed on the IL on June 13 with a right hamstring strain, should solidify center field again, allowing **Cody Bellinger** to remain in left field where he is best defensively and **José Caballero** to get the bulk of his playing time in the infield.

Before getting hurt, Grisham was one of the Yankees' hottest hitters, batting .290 with an .847 OPS over his last 36 games. He should reclaim his leadoff spot against right-handed starters, with a ripple effect down the lineup.

McMahon, meanwhile, will shore up third base after he missed the last 10 days on the IL recovering from a peritonsillar abscess — with the Yankees cycling through Caballero, **Amed Rosario** and **Oswaldo Cabrera** there in his absence. Despite some rough stretches offensively, the lefty hitter had been respectable of late, batting .258 with a .790 OPS over his last 24 games.

Cabrera, who was called up from Triple-A when McMahon landed on the IL, is likely to head back to Scranton/Wilkes-Barre, while the Yankees will have to open another roster spot for Grisham. It's possible that could be **Spencer Jones**, since his playing time would likely be limited with Grisham back, though he has been one of the few Yankees who have actually been hitting of late.

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STATE OF LOCKDOWN: Bosnia's Ermedin Demirovic is swarmed by U.S. goalkeeper Matt Freese (left) and defenders Tim Ream (right) and Antonee Robinson as the American defense looked impenetrable — even down a man — in Wednesday's win in San Francisco. Shutterstock

REAL DEAL

Unflappable USMNT defense looks ready for world's best

By ETHAN SEARS

SEATTLE — If no one truly knew how good the U.S. national team was before the World Cup started, then no one had even the slightest clue of how good its defense was.

Up until a few weeks ago, and really up until Wednesday night, it was viewed as the biggest weakness in the lineup. Now? After looking completely unfazed across 36 minutes defending with 10 men? Throw that storyline right in the dumpster.

Not only did the U.S. keep a clean sheet in the 2-0 win over Bosnia-Herzegovina, but the Americans also defended as well as we've ever seen them defend, particularly in the second half.

"It's kind of an adrenaline rush whenever you do go down 10 men," Weston McKennie said. "Cause you're like 'Oh, s—t, if we can pull off this win and hold them to zero goals, it's even bigger.'

"Everyone's running everywhere and tackling and making sure we keep our structure. We don't want to give up a goal. It'd be easy to have an excuse if we did score but that's not the type of team we are."

Tim Ream, whose place in the lineup has been so frequently questioned, had as good of a game as he's ever had in a national team shirt. The same goes for Chris Richards, a rock all night long. The two of them seemed to win every ball, to be everywhere.

"Playing with Tim and Chris is a blessing," goalkeeper Matt Freese said. "To have them in front of me and be part of that trio … a goalkeeper and the two center backs are always in constant communication throughout a game. To be able to rely on them and feel their support as well as encourage them, push them and support them is really a blessing."

Incredibly, despite playing down a man for the majority of the second half, the U.S. had more expected goals than Bosnia during that span, 0.23 to 0.21. They kept their shape no matter what, their organization saying everything about the job Mauricio Pochettino has done with this team, and their resilience saying everything about their character.

Bosnia is not Spain or France, but it isn't a team with no attacking talent at all. It seemed to have no ideas, to ask no questions. Sergej Barbarez's substitutes had no impact. Freese, who hadn't been seriously tested in his first two starts, handled all three saves he was asked to make with little problems.

"Because of the way we train, because of the conversations that we have, the communication that we have, the fight, the intensity, the aggression with and without the ball … there was not one guy that I could look at and say, 'OK, we may need to switch things around here,' " Ream said. "It was a steely focus. Unless you're on the field and you see it in guys' eyes, it's hard to understand, but it felt so comfortable, even down to 10 men."

Every team says the right things about their confidence and composure. So did the U.S., but seeing is believing with these things.

Now we've seen it. Now we can believe it.

It was just four months ago that Belgium winger Jérémy Doku had his way with the U.S. in a 5-2 friendly victory in Atlanta. It's hard to see that happening again after watching the U.S. — more tactically sound, more systematically refined — defend throughout this tournament.

Still, Belgium will easily be the best attacking team the U.S. has faced all tournament. The two-goal cushion that felt like a lifeline against Bosnia was the same scoreline that Belgium erased in the span of five minutes to force extra time against Senegal earlier Wednesday afternoon, eventually winning when Youri Tielemans scored on a penalty kick.

If Wednesday wasn't proof that they can handle it, though, then nothing will be.

"We were quite comfortable in our shape when we had 11 men, and then when we had 10 men, we knew what we had to do to limit them in different scenarios in the game," Jedi Robinson said. "Everyone's positioning is pretty good. We were all on the same page, the effort was there. And that's a great platform for us to go and perform."

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Victory draws historic ratings

By MARK SULEYMANOV

The U.S. men's national team's win over Bosnia-Herzegovina was a net positive — on the field and on television.

USMNT's 2-0 victory Wednesday night in Santa Clara, Calif., drew historic ratings, with preliminary numbers showing the game averaged 24.429 million viewers, Fox Sports PR announced Thursday.

At its peak, the World Cup's Round of 32 matchup attracted nearly 32 million viewers.

All told, the matchup was the most-watched English-language soccer telecast in U.S. history.

The United States has proved to be a ratings boon, starting with the team's World Cup opener against Paraguay. That 4-1 win drew 15.99 million viewers, at the time becoming the most-watched USMNT telecast ever and the top-viewed FIFA Men's World Cup Group Stage telecast in English-language U.S. history — again, at the time.

Overcoming a pair of overturned goals and a controversial red card against star Folarin Balogun, the USMNT advanced Wednesday to set up a Round of 16 matchup against Belgium.

Before being issued the red card for stepping on the ankle of Bosnia's Tarik Muharemovic, Balogun kicked off the scoring for the USMNT in the 45th minute by sending the club into halftime on a high note with a 1-0 lead.

U.S. midfielder Malik Tillman later added a curling free kick in the 82nd minute to propel the USMNT to the 2-0 win.

As the USMNT prepares for Belgium, it will do so without Balogun, whose red card leaves him ineligible for the Round of 16.

But Monday's historic tilt is likely to challenge, if not surpass, viewership from the World Cup Round of 32 victory.

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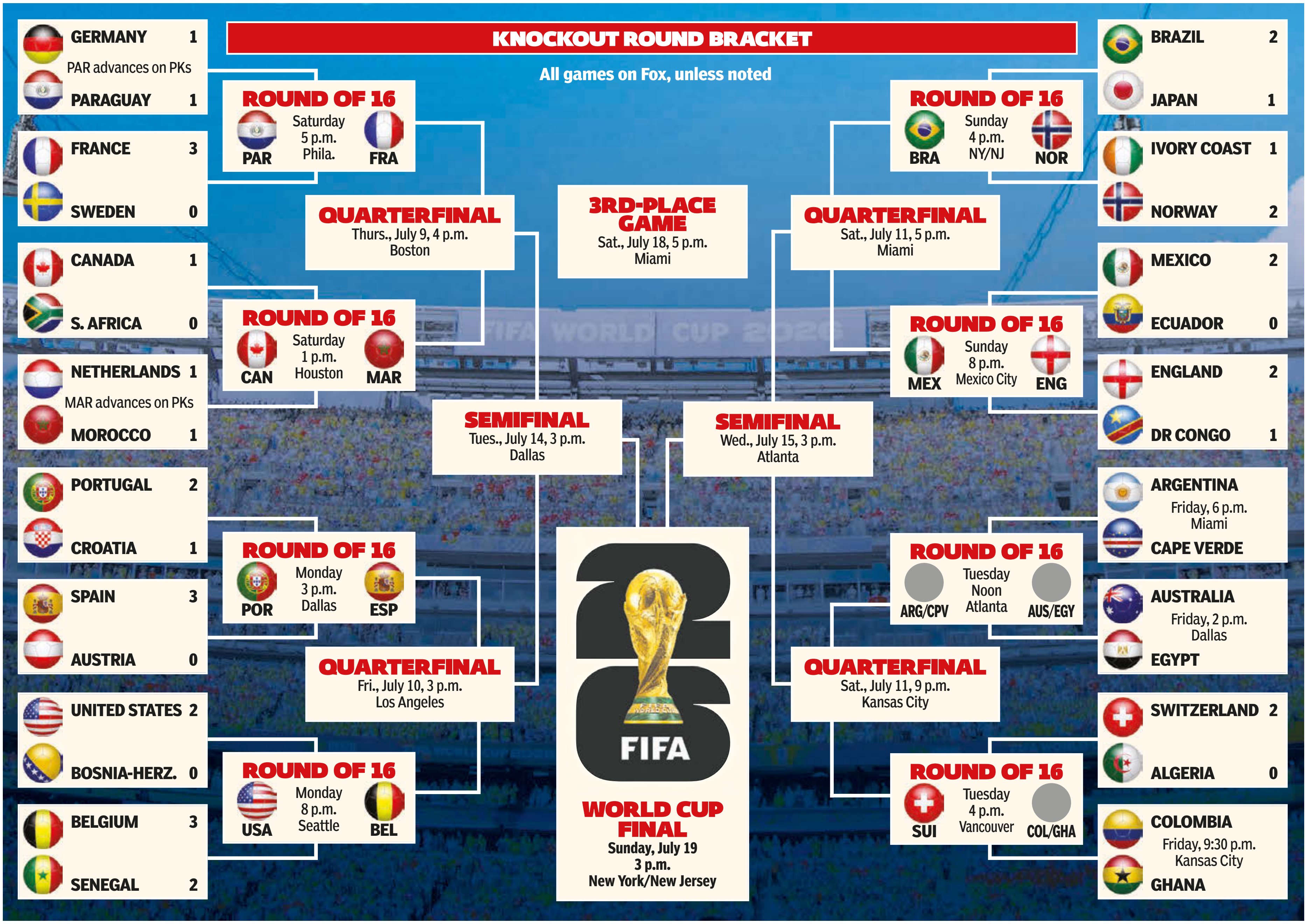
Wild win for Portugal / Page 49



KNOCKOUT ROUND BRACKET

All games on Fox, unless noted

GERMANY 1
PAR advances on PKs
PARAGUAY 1

FRANCE 3
SWEDEN 0

CANADA 1
S. AFRICA 0

NETHERLANDS 1
MAR advances on PKs
MOROCCO 1

PORTUGAL 2
CROATIA 1

SPAIN 3
AUSTRIA 0

UNITED STATES 2
BOSNIA-HERZ. 0

BELGIUM 3
SENEGAL 2

ROUND OF 16
PAR Saturday 5 p.m. Phila. FRA

ROUND OF 16
CAN Saturday 1 p.m. Houston MAR

ROUND OF 16
POR Monday 3 p.m. Dallas ESP

ROUND OF 16
USA Monday 8 p.m. Seattle BEL

QUARTERFINAL
Thurs., July 9, 4 p.m.
Boston

QUARTERFINAL
Fri., July 10, 3 p.m.
Los Angeles

SEMIFINAL
Tues., July 14, 3 p.m.
Dallas

3RD-PLACE GAME
Sat., July 18, 5 p.m.
Miami

WORLD CUP FINAL
Sunday, July 19
3 p.m.
New York/New Jersey

SEMIFINAL
Wed., July 15, 3 p.m.
Atlanta

QUARTERFINAL
Sat., July 11, 5 p.m.
Miami

QUARTERFINAL
Sat., July 11, 9 p.m.
Kansas City

ROUND OF 16
BRA Sunday 4 p.m. NY/NJ NOR

ROUND OF 16
MEX Sunday 8 p.m. Mexico City ENG

ROUND OF 16
ARG/CPV Tuesday Noon Atlanta AUS/EGY

ROUND OF 16
SUI Tuesday 4 p.m. Vancouver COL/GHA

BRAZIL 2
JAPAN 1

IVORY COAST 1
NORWAY 2

MEXICO 2
ECUADOR 0

ENGLAND 2
DR CONGO 1

ARGENTINA
Friday, 6 p.m.
Miami
CAPE VERDE

AUSTRALIA
Friday, 2 p.m.
Dallas
EGYPT

SWITZERLAND 2
ALGERIA 0

COLOMBIA
Friday, 9:30 p.m.
Kansas City
GHANA

Spain flashes full potential in trouncing Austria

By ETHAN SEARS

SPAIN	3	**World Cup Round of 32**
AUSTRIA	0	

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — It took Spain three weeks and four games into this World Cup to arrive fully formed, long enough to cause distinct murmuring over some of manager Luis de la Fuente's choices and a certain unease when one compared La Roja's group stage to the waltz performed by France and Argentina.

That is all behind them now.

The Spain we saw here at SoFi Stadium on Thursday, the one that dismantled Austria 3-0 without ever seeming to break a sweat, is the Spain that won the European championship two summers ago and might go one better this summer.

"I cannot remember any unforced error they made," Austria manager Ralf Rangnick said. "I think Spain, today, really showed us their best performance. I would dare to say that we did not only [face] the European champion, but possibly the next world champion."

Rangnick, whose side had to face Argentina in the group, might be worth listening to.

It was almost galling how easy this was. Spain won the expected goals 2.84 to 0.32; it outshot Austria 23-5 and had two-thirds of the possession, per SofaScore. Goalkeeper Unai Simón never had to make a save. Granted, it was not the hardest match Spain could have played in the Round of 32, but just ask Germany whether that matters.

"If I were Spain's opponent, I would ask myself, what can they improve? There's really not much left to improve," Rangnick said. "They are a perfect clockwork."

De La Fuente, already perhaps looking ahead to the Round of 16 where either Portugal or Croatia awaits, refused to agree. The manager who took Spain to the European title two years ago insisted there's still a higher level from his side.

"Perhaps you saw what you think is the best of us, but that's in our spirit: You keep doing things better," he said. "To keep on enhancing, keep on improving. You need to remember, this team has not reached its cap. … We are insatiable."

Insatiable was an apt description for his team's character Thursday.

Even before Spain opened the scoring, Mikel Oyarzabal passing Marc Cucurella's cross into the net after 36 minutes, they felt inevitable. Afterward, it felt over. Rangnick's side seemed to be without any coherent plan to hang on to the ball, let alone ask serious questions of Spain's defense. The Spanish counterpress alone seemed to engulf them.

Spain's five consecutive World Cup matches without conceding tied a record, while Simón's 519 consecutive minutes without conceding set one.

Rodri and Pedri, whose usage in midfield has been questioned endlessly by the Spanish press, were near perfection. The same goes for Cucurella and Pedro Porro, the latter's late arrival in the box resulting in a goal with Austria's defense consumed with Baena.

"I saw him live for the first time during the match and it was exceptional," Rangnick said of Rodri, one of two Ballon d'Or winners at this tournament who have ceded the spotlight on their own team, along with France's Ousmane Dembélé.

Oyarzabal, who added a second goal — on a second assist from Cucurella — was clinical in front of net.

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SEEING RED!

FIFA a joke for Balogun injustice

Mark Cannizzaro

WHEN is enough enough?

When does FIFA get issued a yellow — or even a red — card for its poor performance employing a referee who's in over his head in the World Cup, the largest global sporting event on the planet?

And VAR.

What the hell are we doing with VAR?

The concept of VAR (video assistant referee) is a sound one — much like replay in the NFL and other sports — in that we want to get the calls right.

But who can possibly argue that match referee Raphael Claus or VAR official Juan Ernesto Soto Arévalo got it right when America's top striker Folarin Balogun was ejected from Wednesday's Round of 32 game against Bosnia-Herzegovina with a red card in the 64th minute of a tight match?

This is not some jingoistic pro-American red-white-and-blue-tinted glasses complaint about the U.S. team being wronged.

It's common damned sense from someone who not only covers the sport as a journalist but is also a fan.

Not even Tarik Muharemovic, the Bosnian player whose right ankle Balogun accidentally stepped on — read: ACCIDENTALLY — would argue that Balogun should have been sent off.

Claus, in fact, never even reached into his pocket to issue a yellow card on the play in real time.

So, what does that tell you?

That he didn't see the act as flagrant.

What exactly Soto Arévalo saw that spurred him to call for the red card after watching the same replays the rest of the soccer world has seen and is appalled by is an entirely different story.

The decision to red-card Balogun, at its core, was an irresponsible one and one that has taken away one of the most dynamic players in the tournament (and the world) in what will be one of the most-watched sporting events ever Monday night when the U.S. plays Belgium.

Is that good for the sport?

Is it good for the World Cup?

Those questions require no efforts to answer because the answer is too obvious.

The decision to take Balogun away from the U.S. against Belgium absolutely compromises the Americans' chance to advance.

Balogun has a goal in each of the three World Cup matches he's played — and he was the best player on the pitch Wednesday night in Santa Clara, where the U.S. survived Bosnia and the egregious VAR gaffe 2-0.

There was absolutely zero intent on the part of Balogun to injure Muharemovic, nor was there intent to impede him from making a move toward goal.

Of course, it was a foul. But both players were chasing a loose ball. Balogun wasn't even facing Muharemovic when his foot landed on the ankle, but he did land hard on the ankle. Accidentally.

He should have been issued a yellow (warning) card on the play for a careless action. End of story.

You've probably seen a dozen videos on social media showing similar plays to the Balogun one that were virtually overlooked — highlighted by Messi's intentional takedown of Algeria's Aïssa Mandi (stepping on the back of his calf with his studs) that received no card.

The Balogun play was a simple play involving two players fighting for possession of the ball — one of a dozen or more similar plays in the match.

And it's ended in a gross misuse of VAR, making a mockery of the system and FIFA.

Either use it correctly or don't use it at all.

The aftermath of Wednesday's incident does not help the credibility of FIFA either in that no organizational accountability was shown.

Unlike with the NFL, which at least makes an effort to be transparent when it comes to refereeing mistakes, we've heard nothing from FIFA.

Per FIFA rules, Balogun was not even permitted to speak to reporters after the match, which is as archaic as it is asinine.

Not only that, but there is no appeal process in place. So, even if someone from FIFA was to review the incident and deem it as a referee and VAR mistake, the U.S. has no recourse.

What's done is done.

And as a result of it, the U.S., forced to play without its best offensive weapon against an excellent and seasoned Belgium team, may be done.

The action of VAR in this case and the subsequent inaction of FIFA has left a stain on the beautiful game.

And that's a damn shame.

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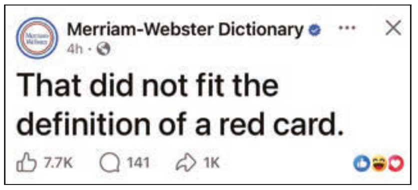
CARD TO BELIEVE: U.S. manager Mauricio Pochettino — and fans — were equal parts up in arms and in disbelief when Folarin Balogun was shown a red card after a VAR review in the second half of Wednesday's game against Bosnia-Herzegovina. Getty Images (2); AP; Reuters

Monday
U.S. vs. BELGIUM
Round of 16
Seattle
8 p.m.
Fox

Bogus card sets off Cup of controversy

By MICHAEL DUARTE

SAN JOSE, Calif. — The celebration lasted only a few hours.



Merriam-Webster Dictionary
4h

That did not fit the definition of a red card.

By the time the United States national team returned to the practice field Thursday morning at PayPal Park, the music had faded, the adrenaline had worn off and the reality of what awaits them in the Round of 16 had settled over training like the Bay Area fog.

The Americans had survived Bosnia-Herzegovina. Now they had to prepare for Belgium without a player who helped carry them there.

Folarin Balogun's controversial red card in Wednesday night's 2-0 victory in Santa Clara did more than force the U.S. to survive the final half hour with 10 men. It stripped Mauricio Pochettino's squad of its most dangerous attacking weapon for Monday's showdown in Seattle against one of the top teams in the world.

No players or coaches spoke to reporters after Thursday's training session, leaving the silence to tell the story.

The debate, meanwhile, has exploded everywhere else.

Sports radio. Television talk shows. Podcasts. Social media. Even Merriam-Webster and former USMNT coach Bruce Arena weighed in as the controversial VAR decision became one of the defining talking points of this World Cup.

Inside the American locker room after the match, there was little doubt about how players viewed the situation.

"The guys talked about it in the locker room. Obviously, the ref made the decision that he made, but I think it's questionable," midfielder Weston McKennie said. "I think there's been many other plays like that throughout the tournament on other players that a card wasn't given at all. It's disappointing. Some of my teammates have said they don't think it's a red card. Maybe a yellow, but it was unintentional."

Pochettino didn't hide his frustration afterward either.

"For me it was never a red card," the U.S. manager said. "There was never any intention. That was a normal action in football. It happened by accident. For me that is never a red card."

Hours later, after players watched the replays on their phones, emotions shifted from disbelief to resignation.

"I think it's a yellow card," captain Tyler Adams said. "I think when you slow everything down, it's always gonna look worse."

When informed FIFA regulations leave virtually no avenue for U.S. Soccer to appeal the suspension, Adams shrugged.

"Typical FIFA."

McKennie was even less diplomatic.

"I think it's a bit bogus," he said about not being able to appeal the decision. "Whether we're missing a guy for the next game, the next guy will step up and contribute what they can to the team."

The inconsistency of the calls continues to fuel the outrage. Fans quickly circulated clips of other studs-up challenges — including one involving Golden Boot co-leader Lionel Messi — that didn't even result in a foul. A U.S. Soccer official privately showed reporters a collage of similar incidents that drew neither red cards nor, in some cases, even fouls.

Reasonable people agree Balogun committed a foul. His boot came down on Tarik Muharemovic's ankle while both players chased a loose ball. It deserved punishment. Maybe even a yellow card.

But intent matters. Context matters. Balogun wasn't looking at the defender. He wasn't lunging to stop a breakaway. He wasn't attempting to injure anyone.

Now, the U.S. heads into its biggest match of the tournament missing the striker who scored in all three of his World Cup appearances and had been the Americans' most influential player. He could have easily been among the contenders for the Golden Boot had he stayed in the game or taken the field against Belgium. He was undoubtedly on his way to his third Man of the Match honor.

Bosnia couldn't stop Balogun.

But VAR did.

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NYCFC boss: City perfect for Pulisic

By CHRISTIAN ARNOLD

New York City FC CEO Brad Sims is confident about one thing when it comes to the club.

If you're a star player looking to make the jump to MLS, how could NYCFC not make sense for you? And that includes Christian Pulisic. Sims confirmed the club's interest in the American soccer star but noted that "my understanding is that he is not available at the moment" in a conversation with The Post.

"If you're buying into MLS and you're a high-profile player, you know New York City is going to be at the very top of the vast majority of people's list," he said. "That's a competitive advantage for us, and then you see what we're doing with building the 'Cathedral of Soccer' for this sport, and not just in New York, but in this country. And the direction of travel for our club and the sport in this market, we've got a great story to tell. I think that high-profile players will be very interested in coming here, and so we'll see how it works out in the future."

Pulisic is still under contract with AC Milan for another two years, but whether he is looking to stay with the struggling Serie A club is less certain. Multiple reports had already indicated that AC Milan was not looking to move him right now, and Pulisic has not publicly commented on his future there.

Word of NYCFC's interest in Pulisic first surfaced last month, and Italian outlet La Gazzetta dello Sport reported that the club was prepared to make a massive offer to Pulisic to entice him stateside. Sims said that MLS "is very interested in having him in the league" and that if he were to become available, "safe to say we would be interested."

NYCFC is moving into a new stadium next season, and a player of Pulisic's caliber would fit the bill for a splashy move to excite the existing fanbase of the club, along with the casual New York sports fan. Sims told The Post that the club's vision is to take the mantle as the "undisputed flagship franchise of Major League Soccer."

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Peacock

STREAM IT OR SKIP IT

"Strung" (Peacock) coalesces into one hell of an idiotic ending, although I'm not sure it's worth enduring the first 90 minutes of this sloppy screenplay to get to the final 30.

OUR CALL: SKIP IT

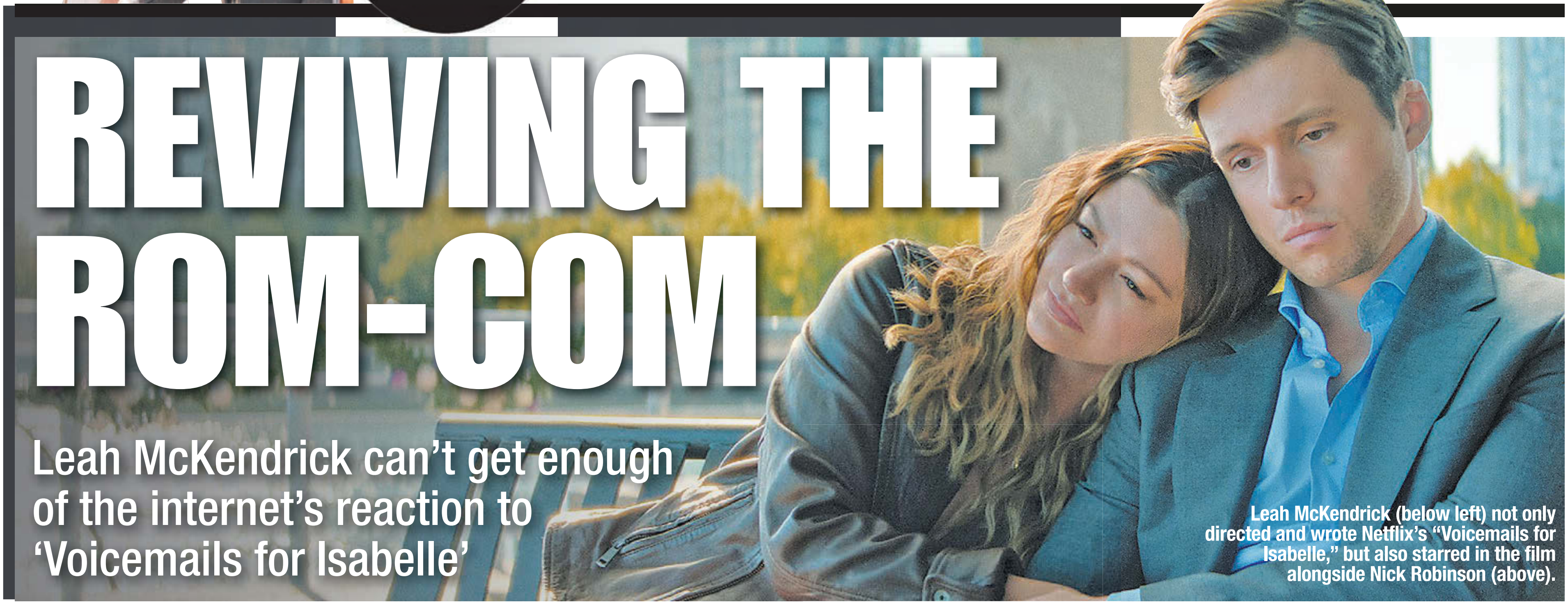
WHAT TO WATCH

"Little Brother" (Netflix) was much more watchable than expected. That's thanks in large part to **Eric André** (left), whose irresistible charm turns what could have been a tone-deaf characterization of mental illness into a hilarious, and occasionally heartwarming, romp.

For more on your favorite TV and films, visit decider.com

DECIDER

WHAT TO WATCH.
WHEREVER
YOU WATCH



Netflix

REVIVING THE ROM-COM

Leah McKendrick can't get enough of the internet's reaction to 'Voicemails for Isabelle'

Leah McKendrick (below left) not only directed and wrote Netflix's "Voicemails for Isabelle," but also starred in the film alongside Nick Robinson (above).

By HOPE SLOOP

NO need to ask: Leah McKendrick has seen your TikToks and Instagram posts about **"Voicemails for Isabelle."**

In the short time since Netflix released what is being praised online as one of the best rom-coms in recent years, McKendrick — who serves as writer, director, and one of the stars of the film — says she has experienced just about every emotion a person can feel. Even more than that, she's watched as the audience has felt those same feelings alongside her… especially the viewers she wasn't expecting. "Oh my God, I love — I will say — I love the husbands crying," she tells DECIDER of the online reaction to her No. 1 film on Netflix. "Husbands crying always because my life motto is 'This one's for the girls,' you know? Everything I do is for the girls and the gays. So it's very meaningful to me when men, straight men, also connect. It's not that I've given up on them, I love them. My husband happens to be a straight man, but it's so girl-coded. I do everything for my younger self, honestly. So when the men also pick up on it and are crying and taking part in it and dancing, I'm so stoked."

It's hard not to watch and cry as the movie checks all of the emotional boxes, and even has some fans online saying that it has renewed their faith in love. "Voicemails from Isabelle" follows Jill (Zoey Deutch), who leaves voice messages to her deceased sister Izzy (Ciara Bravo), telling her about her life in San Francisco in the months after her death. Unwittingly, a Texas real estate agent (Nick Robinson) begins to receive the messages after Izzy's phone number is reassigned. While the film is chock-full of classic rom-com shenanigans, it has also resonated with audiences who have praised the display of non-romantic love between sisters and friends. In turn, that connection and thematic exploration in the film has yielded some pretty incredible TikToks and social media posts, where users are sharing everything from their discovery of Easter eggs, to their Robyn dance parties and their puffy-eyed husbands who swore they weren't interested. In summary, it's all a filmmaker wants when they set out to tell a story that moves the audience to laugh, cry, and (maybe, just maybe) leave a voicemail for a loved one. It's a moment McKendrick never wants to wake up from.

DECIDER: There are so many dads out there who are watching with their daughters and seeing their own Jill and Izzy, which hits on a different level. What is your own Izzy [her younger sister] saying about this?

LEAH MCKENDRICK: She's so proud of me. It's been a very long journey and she's really good at not getting attached to things that way, she's a rock. I can get so heartbroken by this business when, it's an eight-year journey, you know. But she loved it immediately. And on my last page, the dedication said, "To my little sister, Olivia Isabelle, who makes me brave."

One of my friends has two kids, a girl and a boy, and she always says she won't stop until she gives her daughter a sister. That's the power of that bond, which also makes the end scene with Izzy dancing behind Jill such a gut punch. How did that come about?

That was wild. I wasn't sure about that. I thought about it and I was like, "It could be creepy. It could be weird," and people might be like, "You just ruined the movie." I wasn't sure, but I couldn't stop thinking about it. And I'm a big believer in just get it, just shoot it. But the problem is we're shooting in Vancouver, we have to get Ciara to fly in. It's an additional day, she's got to learn the dance, we got to schedule this, it's a whole thing. It's not something that you can just throw together on a whim, right? So there were a lot of discussions happening with producers and they were like, "It's not going to work, we can't figure this out scheduling-wise." And I was like, "Okay." Then I just kept bringing it up as though I had just thought of it.

Sony Pictures

TRENDING NOW

Shemar Moore's (left) Sargeant Daniel "Hondo" Harrelson is back! Starz announced that they have acquired the new **"S.W.A.T."** spinoff series starring and executive produced by Moore himself. Titled **"S.W.A.T. Exiles,"** the new series will also feature actors Ronen Rubenstein, Freddy Miyares, Zyra Gorecki, Adain Bradley, and Lucy Barrett.

WHAT'S NEW

ON APPLE TV
"Silo," the Season 3 premiere (left).

ON DISNEY+
"The Simpsons: Simpsley," a streaming exclusive episode.

Best Bets

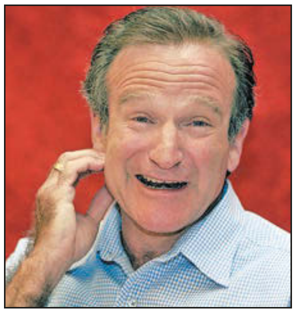
What's on Tonight

ADVENTURE

Back to the Future: 3 p.m. on AMC. Michael J. Fox, Christopher Lloyd. Marty McFly is accidentally sent 30 years into the past in a time-traveling DeLorean.

SPORT

2026 FIFA World Cup: 5:45 p.m. on WNYW 5. Cape Verde at Argentina from Miami Stadium. Argentina swept its three matches led by Lionel Messi.



FAMILY

Jumanji: 10:30 p.m. on VH1. **Robin Williams**, Kirsten Dunst. A magic board game summons jungle perils and a missing boy.

Friday July 3, 2026

SP = Spectrum, C = Cablevision, F = FiOS Movies 🟥 Sports 🟩 New 🟨

Evening	SP	C	F	6:30pm	7:00pm	7:30pm	8:00pm	8:30pm	9:00pm	9:30pm	10:00pm	10:30pm	11:00pm	11:30pm
2 WCBS	2	2	2	CBS Evening News	Tri State 250: Our Legacy of Liberty		Sheriff Country: Compromised (R)		Fire Country: Who Owns The Dirt (R)		Boston Blue: Code of Ethics (R)		CBS News New York 11:00pm	
4 WNBC	4	4	4	NBC Nightly News	(7:15) New York Live	Access Hollywood (R)	America's Got Talent: AGT: July 4th Party in the USA (R)				Dateline NBC		News 4 New York at 11	(11:35) Tonight Show
5 WNYW	5	5	5	(5:45) 2026 FIFA World Cup: Round of 32: Cape Verde at Argentina. Live.			FIFA World Cup Today Live.		(9:15) 2026 FIFA World Cup: Round of 32: Ghana at Colombia from Kansas City Stadium. Live.					FIFA World Cup Live.
7 WABC	7	7	7	ABC World News	Jeopardy!	Wheel of Fortune (R)	Disney Celebrates America: The Pursuit of Happiness (R)				Disney Celebrates America: America the Beautiful		News	(11:35) Celebrates
9 WWOR	9	9	9	Politics Unusual	Family Feud (R)	Family Feud (R)	The News on My 9	Politics Unusual	Chicago Fire: Spartacus (R)		The 10 O'Clock News	Family Feud (R)	Chicago Fire: Category 5 (R)	
11 WPIX	11	11	11	Mets Pre Game Live.	MLB Baseball: New York Mets at Atlanta Braves from Truist Park. Live.						New York Nightcap	PIX11 News at Ten	New York Nightcap	Seinfeld
13 WNET	13	13	13	BBC News America	The PBS News Hour		Washington Week	Firing Line	Capitol Fourth: 250th Weekend Celebration			Future of Past	Amanpour and Company	
21 WLIW	21	21	21	(6:00) News	Inspector George Gently: Burning Man			The Brokenwood Mysteries			Astrid: 30,000 Feet (R)		BBC News	The Day
25 WNYE	25	22	25	The Civil	Made In New York Talks			Papa Ray's	Inside Pow	Artists Den Reprise		Short Film	NYU Journ	Cinema
31 WPXN	31	3	531	S.W.A.T.	Pregame	WNBA Basketball Live.				Game Break	WNBA Basketball: Chicago Sky at Las Vegas Aces.			
41 WXTV	41	6	41	N Univisi	La rosa de Guadalupe		Tan Cerca de Ti, Nace el		Guardián de mi Vida		Hermanas Un Amo		Noticias	N Univisio
47 WNJU	47	16	12	Copa Mundial de FIFA 2026 Directo.			Mundial	Mundial	Copa Mundial de FIFA 2026: Ghana vs Colombia. Directo.					El Mundial
55 WLNY	55	10	10	Perfect (R)	Last Man	Last Man	Tri State 250:		Inside	ET	Judge Judy	Judge Judy	Neighbor.	Neighbor.
A&E	46	46	181	Road Wars	Road Wars	Road Wars	Road Wars	Road Wars	Road Wars	Road Wars	Road Wars	Road Wars	Road Wars	Road Wars
AMC	54	43	231	(5:30) Back to the Future Part II (1989)			Back to the Future (1985, Science Fiction) Michael J. Fox. PG ★★★★					Back to the Future Part II (1989) ★★★½		
BBCAM	71	101	189	Law & Ordr	Law & Order: Survivor		Law & Order: Corruption		Law & Order		Law & Order: Deadbeat		Law & Order	
BET	37	54	270	Colombiana (2011, Action) Zoe Saldana. PG-13 ★★½					Enough (2002, Drama) Jennifer Lopez. PG-13 ★★½					
BRAVO	18	44	185	Housewives	Real Housewives (R)		Real Housewives (R)		Real Housewives (R)		Real Housewives (R)		Real Housewives (R)	
CNBC	15	24	102	Shark Tank	Shark Tank (R)		Shark Tank (R)		Shark Tank (R)		Shark Tank (R)		Shark Tank	
CNN	78	25	100	(6:00) Lead	Erin Burnett OutFront		Independence Eve Live with Anderson & Andy: Celebrating 250							
COMEDY	45	50	190	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	The Office	Family Guy	Family Guy
DISC	66	27	120	Woodsmen	The Last Woodsmen (R)		The Last Woodsmen (R)		The Last Woodsmen		(10:01) Mine Rescue (R)		(11:01) Mine Rescue (R)	
DISNEY	49	31	250	Big City	Big City	Big City	Moana (2016) Dwayne Johnson. ★★★½			ZOMBIES	ZOMBIES	ZOMBIES	Miraculous	Miraculous
E!	24	51	196	Men (R)	Men (R)	Men (R)	Men (R)	Men (R)	Men (R)	Men (R)	Taylor (R)			
ESPN	28	36	70	Sports	ESPN Films				ESPN Films				SportsCenter	
ESPN2	29	35	74	Interruption	Return of the Clowns		NBA Summer League Basketball: Teams TBA Live.				30 for 30			ESPN FC
FBN	43	106	117	Dynasty (R)	American Dynasty (R)		American Dynasty: Mars		American Dynasty (R)		American Dynasty (R)		Vietnam: My Father	
FNC	44	26	118	Spc. Rpt.	The Ingraham Angle		Jesse Watters Primetime		Hannity				Fox News @ Night	
FOOD	50	97	164	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners	Diners
FREE	38	49	199	Sorcerer's Apprentice ★★½		National Treasure: Book of Secrets (2007) Nicolas Cage. PG ★★★					Celebrates: America the		The 700 Club (R)	
FS1	400	99	83	Saratoga	ALL IN: INDYCAR		ARCA Racing: Chicagoland Live.				Indycar INXT Practice		ALL IN: INDYCAR	
FX	10	40	53	Resurgence	Independence Day (1996, Science Fiction) Will Smith. PG-13 ★★★						Celebrates: America the		Sunny	America
HALL		191	240	(6:00) Movie			Movie				Golden	Golden	Golden	Golden
HGTV	64	98	165	My Lottery	My Lottery	My Lottery	My Lottery	My Lottery	My Lottery	Zillow Wild	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters	Hunters
HIST	40	47	128	America The Story of Us: Cities/Boom			America The Story of Us: Bust/WWII (R)				(10:05) America The Story of Us: Superpower/Mill (R)			
ID	23	171	123	Murder	Murder in the Heartland		See No Evil		To Be Announced		See No Evil: Goodnight		See No Evil	
LIFE	62	45	140	(6:00) NCIS	NCIS: Frame Up		NCIS: Probie		NCIS: Model Behavior		(10:03) NCIS: Boxed In		(11:03) NCIS: Deception	
MeTV	33	33	3	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	Andy	Andy	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Golden	Golden	Burnett	P. Mason
MSG	27	87	78	NY Knicks	Team Boxing League: San Antonio Snipers at NYC Attitude					Team Boxing League: NYC Attitude at Miami Assassins Replay.				
MSG Plus	48	88	80	PokerGO Cu	PokerGO Cup		The Garden Cup: Madison Square Garden Replay.						NHL Hockey Replay.	
MSNOW	14	23	103	Ari Melber	The Weeknight		All in with Chris Hayes		The Briefing Jen Psaki		Lawrence O'Donnell		The 11th Hour with Ali	
MTV	20	53	210	Secrets PG	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban (2004, Fantasy) Daniel Radcliffe. ★★★½						(10:05) Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (2005)			
NATGEO	65	162	121	Parks (R)	National Parks (R)		National Parks (R)		National Parks: USA		National Parks (R)		National Parks (R)	
NICK	6	121	252	SpongeBob	The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out of Water (2015)				Friends	Friends	Bang	Bang	Bang	Bang
OWN	173	180	145	(6:00) Belle	Belle Collective		Belle Collective		Heart & Hustle: Houston		Heart & Hustle: Houston		Belle Collective	
PARMT	36	56	54	Dutton (R)	(7:01) Dutton Ranch (R)		Dutton Ranch (R)		(9:14) Dutton Ranch (R)			(10:27) Yellowstone (R)		Yellowsto.
SNY	26	60	77	Yeah ...	Broadway Boxing: Broadway Boxing 2401 Replay.				Yeah ...	Yeah ...	Post Game	Sports	Sports	Sports
SYFY	17	48	180	The Green Hornet (2011, Action) Seth Rogen. PG-13 ★★½					Violent Night (2022, Action) David Harbour. R ★★★					Parker
TBS	8	39	52	Bang	Bang	Bang	Bad Teacher (2011, Comedy) Cameron Diaz. R ★★½				(9:53) Barbie (2023, Comedy) Margot Robbie. ★★★			
TCM	82	41	230	Take Me Out to the Ball Game (1949)			Force of Evil (1948) John Garfield. ★★★			Act of Violence (1948) Van Heflin. ★★★			Criss Cross (1949) NR ★★★	
TLC	52	28	139	90 Day (R)	90 Day Fiancé (R)		90 Day Fiancé: More to Love: Love Is a				90 Day	90 Day: Last (R)		90 Day (R)
TNT	3	37	51	The Legend of Tarzan		65 (2023, Action) Adam Driver. PG-13 ★★½				Godzilla vs. Kong (2021, Action) Millie Bobby Brown. PG-13 ★★★				
TVLAND	85	34	241	Andy	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Loves Raymond: Mentor		Loves Ray.	Loves Ray.	Queens	Queens
USA	16	38	50	Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle (2017)			WWE Friday Night Live.				Everything Menu		WWE: Made (R)	
VH1	19	52	217	Wife/Kids	Wife/Kids	Wife/Kids	Kicking and Screaming (1995, Comedy) Josh Hamilton. R ★★★					Jumanji (1995) Robin Williams. PG ★★★		
WE	59	42	149	(5:30) The Devil Wears Prada (2006)			Love After Lockup: No Crash Dummy			This is Poly		Love After Lockup: No Crash Dummy		
YES	53	89	76	Pregame	MLB Baseball: Minnesota Twins at New York Yankees. Live.						Postgame	YanksExtra	Talkin'	BK Show
HBO	511	301	400	Dragon (R)	How to Make a Killing (2026, Drama) Glen Powell. R				Life, Larry	Life Larry	(10:08) Real Time with (R)		Life Larry	Dragon (R)
MAX	531	371	420	Godzilla	(7:10) Annabelle (2014, Horror) R ★★½			(8:49) Annabelle: Creation (2017, Horror) R ★★★				(10:39) Annabelle Comes Home (2019)		
MGM Plus	595		395	(6:00) A Working Man (2025, Action) R			Protector (2026, Action) Milla Jovovich.			The Fast and the Furious (2001, Action) Paul Walker.				Protector R
PARSHO	551	321	365	Quantum of Solace (2008) Daniel Craig.			The Chi: Truth Thaws		Top Gun: Maverick (2022, Action) Tom Cruise. ★★★½				Clear & Present (1994)	

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FRIDAY, JULY 3, 2026

NEW YORK POST

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CANNIZZARO: Balogun ban just ridiculous and star should be on pitch vs. Belgium

PAGES 60-61

Folarin Balogun won’t be on the field Monday against world power Belgium after he was shown a red card in the United States’ 2-0 win over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Balogun clearly stepped on the ankle of Tarik Muharemovic, but the red card was not even a little bit warranted.

Getty Images (2)

RED, WHITE & SCREWED!

THE WRONG SHOW

EVERYTHING THAT HAS GONE AMISS IN YANKEES’ HISTORIC 7-GAME SKID

PAGES 56-57

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NEW YORK POST
250 YEARS OF AMERICA

Happy Birthday, USA

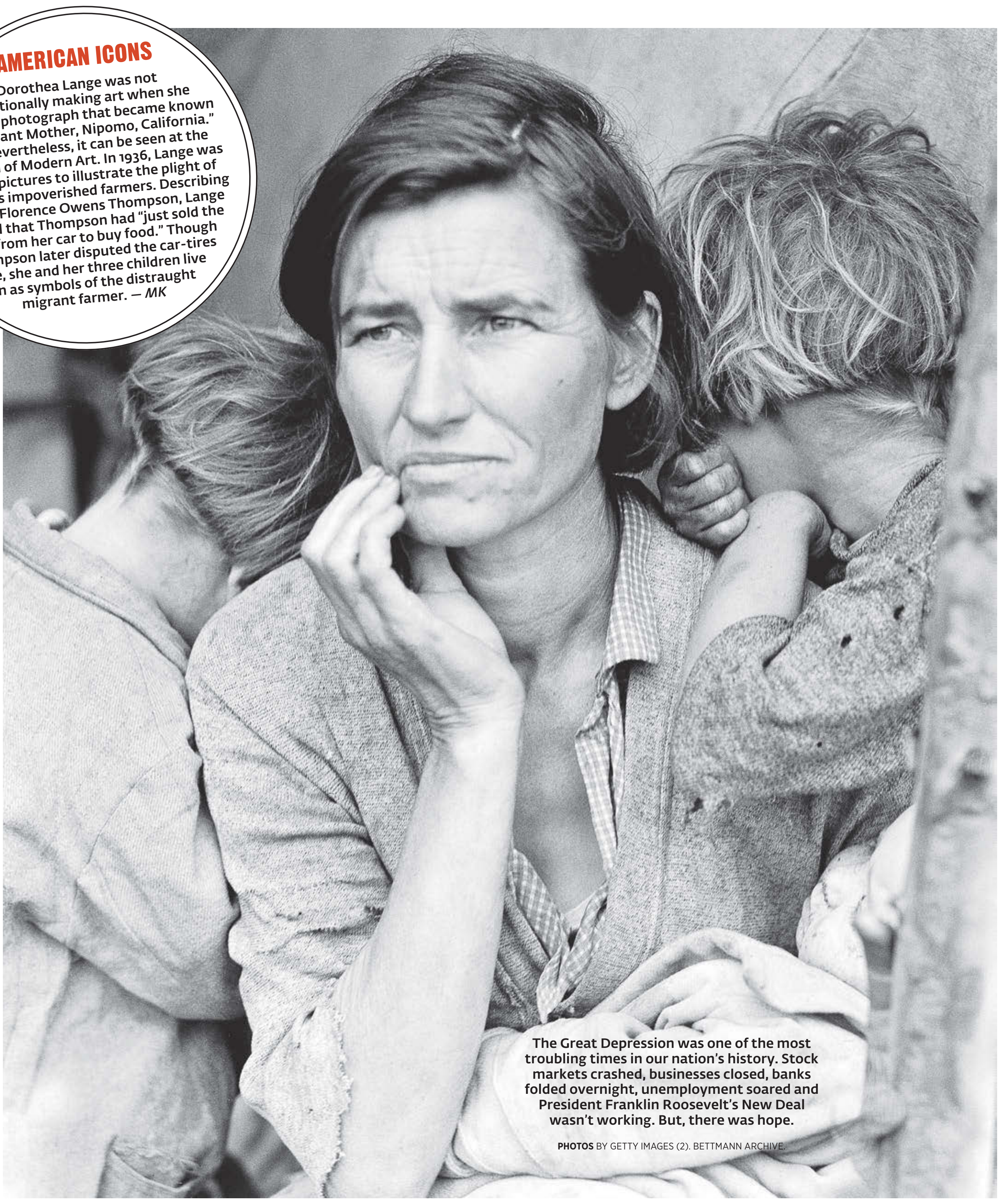
The country's promise, born on July 4, 1776, is its constant pursuit of freedom and equality – shaping our history and influence on the world

JULY
IV
MDCCLXXVI
IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.
Declaration of the thirteen united States of America
the political bands which have connected them with
a decent respect to the opinions of mankind
that all men are created equal, that they are endow
are instituted among Men
abolish it, and

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION
BY PETER LAVIGNA

Finding light in the dark

How the American spirit survived the Great Depression



AMERICAN ICONS

Dorothea Lange was not intentionally making art when she shot the photograph that became known as "Migrant Mother, Nipomo, California." But, nevertheless, it can be seen at the Museum of Modern Art. In 1936, Lange was taking pictures to illustrate the plight of America's impoverished farmers. Describing subject Florence Owens Thompson, Lange claimed that Thompson had "just sold the tires from her car to buy food." Though Thompson later disputed the car-tires tale, she and her three children live on as symbols of the distraught migrant farmer. — *MK*

The Great Depression was one of the most troubling times in our nation's history. Stock markets crashed, businesses closed, banks folded overnight, unemployment soared and President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal wasn't working. But, there was hope.

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES (2). BETTMANN ARCHIVE.

MORE than half a decade into the Great Depression, an Indiana commentator published a sad little profile of his fellow American.

"Who is the 'forgotten man' in Muncie?" the piece asked. "I know him as intimately as I know my own undershirt . . . He is the little guy that takes odd jobs when he can get them . . . And there are hundreds of him in Muncie. They are the original spirit that is America."

That original spirit is what many of us still prize in America, just as we honor the Americans of the 1930s and 1940s when we call them "the Greatest Generation."

After all, they managed to keep that spirit alive through a decade of economic darkness. Our great grandparents were so poor they saved tin cans, old rubber bands, balls of string and bits of gold, which they hid in the mattress. They had no 401(k)s. Yet the same people sustained hope and rose up, collectively, to defend democracy in World War II. How?

AMITY SHLAES

To start, it helps to recall the scale of the downturn that confronted Americans in 1932. One in four was jobless. The stock market had plunged to close to one-tenth of its old level. That year, a new candidate for the presidency emerged: Franklin Roosevelt, the governor of New York. Many Americans recalled Roosevelt as a military hand, for he had served as assistant secretary of the Navy during World War I.

Roosevelt promised to restore the nation by helping the "forgotten man," whom he defined as "the man at the bottom of the economic pyramid." He demanded a New Deal, broad action to revive the frozen economy. Action would bring the jobs back, he said.

Desperate, Americans got behind him. "If he burned down the Capitol," said the humorist Will Rogers, "we would cheer and say, 'Well we at least got a fire started, anyhow.' "

Roosevelt did set plenty of fires — launching new programs that did help, or appeared to do so. Deposit Insurance gave Americans a modicum of safety when they placed what they could save in a bank. Social Security provided pensions for seniors at a time when young families could ill afford to support their parents. Government jobs programs employed the unemployed, even if many of the schemes were temporary.

But some fires the new president set did more to destroy than to thaw. It turned out Roosevelt didn't want to aid the country's most important economic sector, manufacturing. He wanted to take it over — personally. And did so by seeing into law a giant new bureaucracy called the National Industrial Recovery Administration.

Congress, besotted with Roosevelt's boldness, gave him the same power over agriculture. Prices, wages, supply — all were now managed top down. The president made it clear he also had to control money, requiring all citizens hand in their private gold to the Treasury.

The chain of logic behind the takeovers of manufacturing and farming was that reducing supply of goods, or grain, would raise prices and thereby restore the economy. That argument defied common sense. The gold collection sounded like "monetary management" — i.e., respectable — but was simple expropriation. When businesses or individuals complained, the New Dealers prosecuted or scapegoated them. The icon of '20s prosperity, former Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon, spent the 1930s in court.

The result was economic disaster. Mandated to pay a New Deal minimum wage they could not afford, struggling companies paid that wage to the workers on their shrunken payrolls — but refused to hire or rehire. Roosevelt's farming experts insisted that farmers destroy their own crops. In the South, farmers had a hard time getting their mules, so carefully trained to walk between cotton rows, to trample the plants. The mules balked.

The mules could not talk back. But citizens did.

After millions of piglets were slaughtered, a disconcerted housewife wrote Agriculture Secretary Henry Wallace: "It just makes me sick all over to think how the government has killed millions and millions of little pigs." The policy backfired, driving prices so high that pork became unaffordable. As the writer noted, "we poor people cannot even look at a piece of bacon."

The Supreme Court also talked back, throwing out both the NIRA and its agricultural corollary, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration. Roosevelt reacted by finding new ways to impinge, including the 1935 passage of a strong pro-union law, the Wagner Act. Still-strapped companies paid the higher wages Washington-backed unions demanded. And, once again, refused to hire up.

Uncertainty over currency and property stalled market recovery. Some voters were beginning to assume they would be "forgotten men" forever, as in the Muncie writer's comment.

Yet come election year 1936, Republicans did not offer an alternate to the Democrat Roosevelt; the GOP candidate, Alf Landon, put forward a program that looked like New Deal Lite. Voters were now the frozen ones — frozen in panic. With joblessness still over 10%, they stuck with what they knew and re-elected Roosevelt in a landslide.

Emboldened, Roosevelt told the country that he would show businesses he was "their master." The Depression actually deepened so dramatically in the later 1930s that people spoke of "the Depression within the Depression." Unemployment surged to 15%. The pessimism stemmed in part from the fact that the president was waging an especially aggressive campaign against one of the few industries promising enough to fuel recovery: utilities.

It was a utilities executive, Wendell Willkie, who managed to revive the country from its stupor. The New Deal had lulled the nation with a fallacy, "a bedtime story" of government power to cure, he said. Willkie's common sense grew so popular that, when he ran for president in 1940, many predicted he would beat Roosevelt. And Willkie probably would have won — had not Hitler invaded Poland and sent his Heinkels and Junkers to bomb London.

Voters reckoned the old Navy hand, FDR, would be a better commander-in-chief than chief executive. He proved them correct, calling off his war on business and mounting successful campaigns in the Pacific and Europe. In 1944, following D-Day, citizens voted Roosevelt a historic fourth term.

But following Roosevelt's 1945 passing, and victory, Americans showed they had drawn some conclusions from 15 years of experience. They now recognized the merits of collective support for a strong leader in wartime; but they also saw that, when it came to restoring prosperity in peacetime, the individual mattered more.

Voters and Congress showed their understanding first by passing a new law that undid the worst of Roosevelt's destructive labor statute.

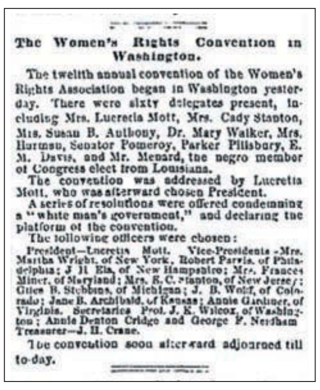
When Roosevelt's successor, Harry Truman, tried to take over an industry — this time, it was steel — the Supreme Court quickly blocked him. And states across the land ensured there would not be another perma-president by passing an amendment to limit any commander-in-chief to two elected terms.

Stand up for the collective in war. Stand up for the individual — the true "forgotten man" — in peacetime. That's strong wisdom, and handed down to us by an impeccable source, the Greatest Generation.

Amity Shlaes is the author of "The Forgotten Man: A New History of the Great Depression."

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

250 YEARS OF POST COVERS



The Women's Rights Convention in Washington.

The twelfth annual convention of the Women's Rights Association began in Washington yesterday. There were sixty delegates present, including Mrs. Lucretia Mott, Mrs. Cady Stanton, Mrs. Susan B. Anthony, Dr. Mary Walker, Mrs. Harman, Senator Pomeroy, Parker Pillsbury, E. M. Davis, and Mr. Menard, the negro member of Congress elect from Louisiana.

The convention was addressed by Lucretia Mott, who was afterward chosen President.

A series of resolutions were offered condemning a "white man's government," and declaring the platform of the convention.

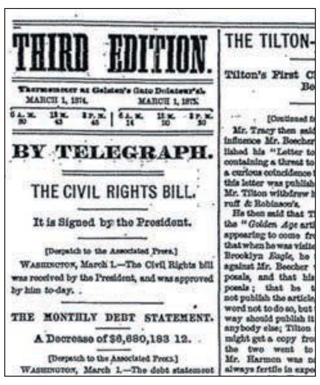
The following officers were chosen:

President—Lucretia Mott. Vice-Presidents—Mrs. Martha Wright, of New York, Robert Purvis, of Philadelphia; J. H. Ela, of New Hampshire; Mrs. Frances Miner, of Maryland; Mrs. E. C. Stanton, of New Jersey; Giles B. Stebbins, of Michigan; J. B. Wolff, of Colorado; Jane B. Archibald, of Kansas; Annie Gardner, of Virginia. Secretaries—Prof. J. K. Wilcox, of Washington; Annie Denton Cridge and George F. Needham. Treasurer—J. H. Crane.

The convention soon afterward adjourned till to-day.

JAN. 20, 1869:
WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE FIGHT

Reporting from the capital, The New York Evening Post described the opening of the 12th national convention of the Woman's Rights Association. Sixty delegates attended. Among them were notable women such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, as well as John Willis Menard, who, in 1868, had become the first African American elected to Congress. Convention resolutions condemned a "white man's government." The months that followed saw numerous advancements in the fight for women's rights. Stanton and Anthony formed the National Woman Suffrage Association in May 1869. That December, Wyoming became the first state to grant women the right to vote, but it wouldn't be until 1920 that the 19th Amendment was ratified, codifying women's suffrage nationwide. — *Ariel Zilber*



THIRD EDITION.

Thermometer at Geissler's Gate Delatour's.

MARCH 1, 1874. MARCH 1, 1875.

BY TELEGRAPH.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS BILL.

It is Signed by the President.

[Despatch to the Associated Press.]

WASHINGTON, March 1.—The Civil Rights bill was received by the President, and was approved by him to-day.

THE MONTHLY DEBT STATEMENT.

A Decrease of $6,680,183 12.

[Despatch to the Associated Press.]

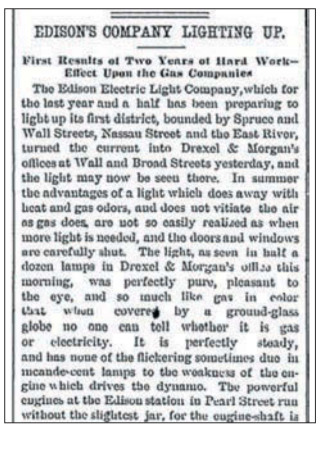
WASHINGTON, March 1.—The debt statement

THE TILTON-

Tilton's First C

MARCH 1, 1875: CIVIL RIGHTS ACT

"The Civil Rights bill was received by the President, and was approved by him to-day," The Evening Post reported. This Reconstruction-era legislation, introduced in 1870 by Massachusetts Sen. Charles Sumner, prohibited racial discrimination in public accommodations and jury duty. The Senate passed the bill by a 28-26 vote, and President Ulysses S. Grant signed it into law days later. It required: "That all persons within the jurisdiction of the United States shall be entitled to the full and equal enjoyment of the accommodations, advantages, facilities, and privileges of inns, public conveyances on land or water, theaters, and other places of public amusement." The Supreme Court declared the law unconstitutional in 1883, but parts would be re-adopted in the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1968. — *DR*



EDISON'S COMPANY LIGHTING UP.

First Results of Two Years of Hard Work—Effect Upon the Gas Companies

The Edison Electric Light Company, which for the last year and a half has been preparing to light up its first district, bounded by Spruce and Wall Streets, Nassau Street and the East River, turned the current into Drexel & Morgan's offices at Wall and Broad Streets yesterday, and the light may now be seen there. In summer the advantages of a light which does away with heat and gas odors, and does not vitiate the air as gas does, are not so easily realized as when more light is needed, and the doors and windows are carefully shut. The light, as seen in half a dozen lamps in Drexel & Morgan's office this morning, was perfectly pure, pleasant to the eye, and so much like gas in color that when covered by a ground-glass globe no one can tell whether it is gas or electricity. It is perfectly steady, and has none of the flickering sometimes due in incandescent lamps to the weakness of the engine which drives the dynamo. The powerful engines at the Edison station in Pearl Street run without the slightest jar, for the engine-shaft is

SEPT. 4, 1882: EDISON LIGHTS UP

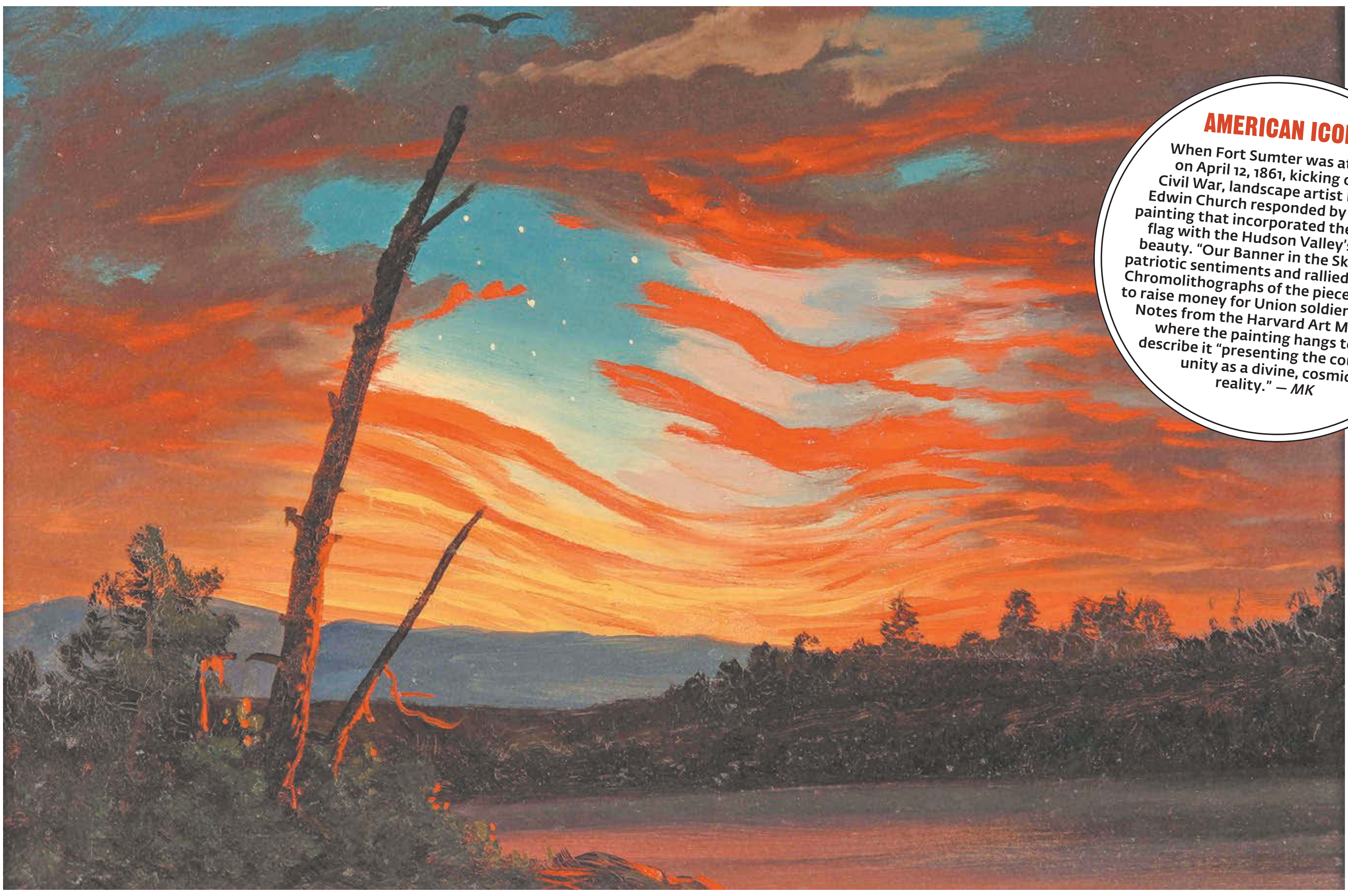
After a roughly two-year preparation, the Edison Electric Light Company delivered its current to the Wall Street offices of Drexel & Morgan — the precursor to JPMorgan Chase — bringing a breathtaking change from gas lamps. "The light … was perfectly pure, pleasant to the eye, and so much like gas in color that when covered by a ground-glass globe no one can tell whether it is gas or electricity," The Post reported. It was part of Thomas Edison's debut of the nation's first commercial electrical power plant on Pearl Street, created to illuminate 1 square mile of Lower Manhattan. Edison himself remained present at the station on a daily basis, "highly delighted" with the work of his company.
— *Zachary Kussin*

The Evening Post.

JUNE 19, 1885: LADY LIBERTY ARRIVES

New York Harbor erupted in cheers as the dissembled Statue of Liberty arrived on the French steamer Isère. The front page of the Evening Post reported that despite "vexatious delays," the "magnificent" celebration day was "the most imposing and the most successful ever undertaken in this harbor," with the "enthusiasm and noise almost beyond description." Local dignitaries welcoming the towering gift from France included Mayor William Grace and Sen. William M. Evarts. "The conception of 'Liberty Enlightening the World' is deeply poetic because it is deeply true," Grace remarked at the festive event. "May it stand as an imperishable monument of the ideas with which it is associated, which are themselves immortal and unchangeable." — *AZ*

TURN TO PAGE 12



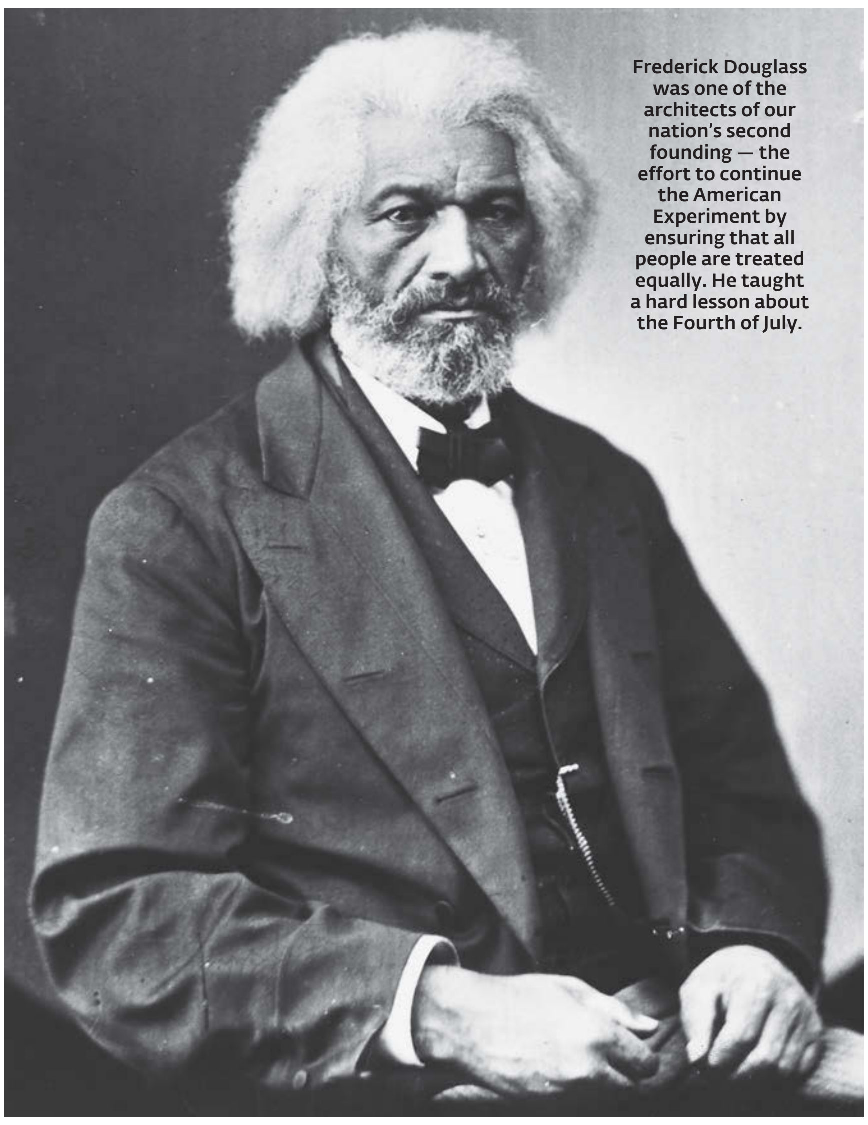
AMERICAN ICONS

When Fort Sumter was attacked on April 12, 1861, kicking off the Civil War, landscape artist Frederic Edwin Church responded by making a painting that incorporated the American flag with the Hudson Valley's natural beauty. "Our Banner in the Sky" roused patriotic sentiments and rallied Unionists. Chromolithographs of the piece were sold to raise money for Union soldiers' families. Notes from the Harvard Art Museums, where the painting hangs today, describe it "presenting the country's unity as a divine, cosmic reality." *— MK*

Civil discourse

War tore the country apart. But two men's words still unite us

LENNY MCALLISTER



Frederick Douglass was one of the architects of our nation's second founding — the effort to continue the American Experiment by ensuring that all people are treated equally. He taught a hard lesson about the Fourth of July.

THREE American presidents died on the Fourth of July. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both let go on the same day in 1826; James Monroe followed in 1831. We tell that story as a star-spangled coincidence — proof the date itself is somehow charged.

But the two men who taught us the hardest lesson about the Fourth did not die on that day. "Fellow Citizens, I am not wanting in respect for the fathers of this republic. The signers of the Declaration of Independence were brave men … [and] the Constitution is a GLORIOUS LIBERTY DOCUMENT. Read its preamble, consider its purposes," the great Frederick Douglass told an Independence Day gathering in Rochester, NY, on July 5, 1852, in the years before the bloodiest war in our history.

And yet, his eyes likely were moist with frustration, pain and anger at the America he witnessed.

"I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common … You may rejoice, I must mourn … Fellow citizens; above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions!"

Those words from the most photographed man of the 19th century echo the tempered reflections of the era's most famous American.

"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal," President Abraham Lincoln noted in 1863. His speech commemorated the Battle of Gettysburg, which culminated in Gen. Robert E. Lee's July 4th retreat from Union forces after more than 45,000 casualties were sustained.

"The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced," Lincoln said. "It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us that we here highly resolve … that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Two of the greatest Americans who ever lived — 19th-century architects of our nation's second founding — remind us, through some of the toughest moments, this civic lesson: The joy of being an American also carries the pang of obligation that jolts us toward active, intentional citizenship to continue the American Experiment successfully.

July 4th has often been a day — from the death of presidents to solemn calls to action — when reflection was required amid the inflection points our nation confronted. Douglass' stark remarks pointed his audience back to the pressing times. He understood their desire to celebrate, but he also told them that America demands an ongoing recommitment to the work required to uplift victims of cultural circumstance, paving the road for those people to eventually join in the celebration of a more Perfect Union.

For Lincoln, his tempered remarks harken back to the founding reasons that the men of 1776 gathered on July 4th of that year: freedom, within a nation under God, that is ruled by a government by the people and for the people. He said, firmly yet earnestly: Those who sacrificed for us did so to provide the opportunity to advance the best of America in any way we can.

The leaders of the Civil War era and the Americans that toiled for our More Perfect Union back then, still teach us with the collective example of their lives. They showed us that each July 4th brings the reminder and opportunity to embrace the moment with grace and gratitude. The inflection points of their lives must prompt us to follow their lead: Enjoy our patriotism with solemn celebration.

During the Civil War era — and as the country felt tensions building up like tectonic plates before the great earthquake of 1860 — Americans from all backgrounds and perspectives engaged in a battle for the soul of the nation. This time is often remembered for slavery and soldiers, but its true lessons are broader.

The conflict was made up of abolitionists and suffragists who fought for freedom, classmates from military academies who fought on opposite sides of the war, and poor men (such as Lincoln and Douglass) who used education and grit to become statesmen — even as violence was condoned on the floor of the US Senate in 1856.

Their solemn celebration of America invoked a resolute commitment: Act with tangible steps to chase our better angels.

Harriet Tubman and Harriet Beecher Stowe showed us how. Their courage and clarity proved that women could lead in thought, word and deed — even in the most trying of times — and their contributions demanded a broader vision of equality. Radical Republicans and United States Colored Troops showed us how. They formed the bedrock of a new political tradition, one born from Lincoln's resolve and Douglass' fire, and proved that black patriotism was not merely a passenger in the survival of the Republic, but a necessary engine.

Clara Barton, the Team of Rivals and the men and women who healed a nation after our bloodiest war showed us how. They formed a collaboration that proved how, even during the worst of times, our motto "E Pluribus Unum" — "out of many, one" — still applied.

Now, in our own time, amid cultural tension and economic uncertainty, the lessons of that era still resonate.

Each generation faces the tugs of division and frustration. Each generation must choose to celebrate the greatness of this country, and work to deepen the promise of the American Dream and its accessibility to those locked away from it through socioeconomic or cultural circumstances. Each generation — from the runaway teenager that was Benjamin Franklin to the runaway slave that was Frederick Bailey (changing his name to Frederick Douglass post-slavery) — has the obligation to stand on civic pride, all while uplifting the standards for America for current and upcoming generations.

There is pain throughout the American Story. Today is no different, and certainly the Civil War era exemplifies the existence of shared pain within our shared history. And yet, with that solemn acknowledgment, there is also a reason to remain celebratory — every day and, notably, during our 250th commemoration: because we are Americans.

Douglass closed his 1852 address with the words of abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison: "God speed the year of jubilee The wide world o'er! … God speed the day when human blood Shall cease to flow! … Until that year, day, hour, arrive, With head, and heart, and hand I'll strive, To break the rod, and rend the gyve."

Celebrate, yet act with an eye toward the best of our traditions.

Revel, yet remember our history — learning its harsh lessons and leading as the best before us did.

Take pride in America, yet take part in advancing our more perfect union.

Be patriotic, yet practice the values that make true patriots of us all.

That is the charge each generation inherits — to rend the shackles its own era confronts America with, and to rend them as one. This is the work. This July 4th, let us get back to it.

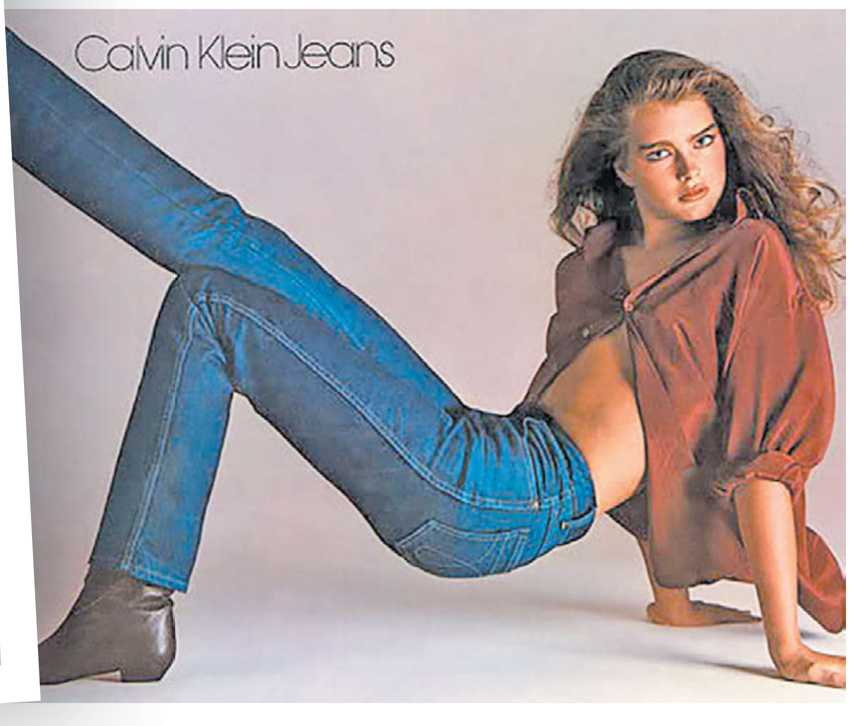
Lenny McAllister is the author of "A Venn Diagram of One: An American Story" (Frederick Douglass Books, Aug. 11).

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES (3).

GREAT AMERICAN PRODUCTS

LEVI'S: Wearing Levi's in the 1960s was a college kid's show of solidarity with the working class. It meant you didn't care to get into country clubs, land a corporate job or eat at fancy restaurants (or, perhaps, be in your parents' will). These rugged pants, first manufactured in San Francisco in 1873 for ranchers, farmers and gold miners, achieved some mainstream popularity with the 1930s dude-ranch fad; but it was really once the hippies took down formalwear that jeans — and Levi's especially — become the universal attire that blends in anywhere. *— JS*

The most successful designers have interpreted American archetypes to reflect the times. Think of the preppy hip-hop sportswear of Tommy Hilfiger (far left, on Zendaya), Ralph Lauren's refined Western wear, Claire McCardell's pioneeering casual looks, Calvin Klein's rebellious denim (on Brooke Shields) and the tailored elegance of Pauline Trigère (bottom).



New fashioned

From the very beginning, American style has been democratic

NANCY MACDONELL

IN January 1937, Pauline Trigère and her husband, Lazar Radley, along with their two sons and Trigère's mother and brother Robert, arrived in New York City. The family was Jewish, and they had left France because of the growing Nazi threat. New York, however, was just a stopover: Their destination was Chile, where Lazar and Robert planned to establish a fashion business. Pauline was an experienced cutter and had grown up in her parents' dressmaking workshop, but Lazar preferred that she not work, so her role would be minimal.

On their first morning in the city, Pauline, Lazar and Robert set out to scout Fifth Avenue for trends. It was then that Pauline began to envision a different future.

In every store they visited, she marveled at the quality of the fabrics and the tailoring. The prices were lower and the selection greater than in Paris. It was the dead of winter, yet shop windows were full of spring clothes. The American industry, Pauline realized, was very well organized and supplied if it could plan and execute production so far in advance. As for the average New Yorker on the street, she was much better dressed than the average Parisienne.

That evening, Pauline told her husband that she was staying in New York. He replied that she was crazy. It had taken months to get their visas. They were sticking to the plan.

Pauline refused to budge.

The family remained in New York, and Pauline went on to become one of the giants of Seventh Avenue, a maker of refined, impeccably tailored coats and suits worn by women including Lena Horne and Grace Kelly. She divorced Lazar. She retired in 1994 at age 86 with three Coty Awards, the precursor to the CFDA awards, to her name.

Pauline Trigère understood instinctively what distinguished American fashion. She came from a tradition in which fashion was for those who could afford it — Paris was the birthplace of the haute couture, which focused on making one garment at a time, for one client at a time. In New York, thanks to a robust manufacturing base, fashion was as plentiful as yellow cabs. As Mayor Fiorello La Guardia once observed, a pretty dress was the right of every American woman, no matter her budget or size.

This thinking is grounded in the American ideals of democracy and equality. Fashion isn't mentioned in the Declaration of Independence or the Bill of Rights, but its importance was certainly recognized by the Founding Fathers (and Mothers). When George Washington was inaugurated on April 30, 1789, he rejected the expensive silks and lace that signified wealth and status in Europe, instead wearing a plain brown wool suit such as any other man might own in the new country he was going to lead.

This principle lives on in the unpretentious archetypes that populate American fashion. The cowboy. The rebel. The worker. Even the most upper-class icon, the Ivy Leaguer, has an informal approach to dress. Tweed blazers and penny loafers were the off-duty clothing of midcentury, and preppies wore them until the elbows of their blazers split and the soles of their Bass Weejuns flapped open.

Connecting these archetypes are values such as simplicity, comfort, utility and optimism. The most successful designers interpret these archetypes and values in ways that make sense for the times they live in. Calvin Klein took classic American sportswear — more on that in a minute — and made it sexy and minimalist. Ralph Lauren blended Western and preppy motifs and overlaid them with the iconography of Hollywood. Tommy Hilfiger gave us a mashup of Ivy League and hip-hop. Marc Jacobs riffed on grunge.

Because American fashion is inclusive, these archetypes continue to evolve beyond clichés and whitewashing. Christopher John Rogers, for example, whose clients include Michelle Obama, Lady Gaga and Anne Hathaway, often alludes to the "Sunday best" tradition of Southern Baptist culture. Willy Chavarria, who worked for both Klein and Lauren, references the Mexican American pachuco and cholo subcultures that originated, respectively, in Texas in the 1930s and California in the '70s.

As for the actual garments that American designers excel at making, they're what's known in the industry as sportswear, a term that doesn't mean gear worn to participate in sports but, rather, casual clothing. The modern rendition includes jeans, T-shirts and athleisure, i.e., what people around the world wear every day. It is fashion at its most accessible. The designer Claire McCardell, aka the mother of American sportswear, defined it as clothing uninfluenced by Paris, where exclusivity is part of the DNA of la mode.

Like her colleague Pauline Trigère, McCardell was a visionary. She knew where fashion was going and how designers needed to prepare for it. "The wardrobe of the future will be global … we'll all be plane-minded, hence global-minded, hence capsule-minded: The fewest number of costumes with the greatest number of possibilities," she told a journalist in 1945.

In fact, McCardell had been designing capsule wardrobes since the mid-1930s, undeterred by the buyers who told her that women wouldn't understand the concept, that they needed to be sold an entire look. It took another 50 years and another American designer, Donna Karan, who created her Seven Easy Pieces in 1985, for the idea to go mainstream.

McCardell died in 1958, at 52. At the time, New York was still fighting to be taken seriously as a fashion capital. Even today, it suffers in comparison to Paris, the center of the fashion world since the reign of Louis XIV. In this juxtaposition, American fashion is usually deemed too commercial.

McCardell never saw this as a fault. "I belong to a mass-production country where any of us, all of us, deserve the right to good fashion and where fashion must be available to all," she wrote.

Mass production doesn't have the romance of century-old couture houses. But it's what drives the $1.8 trillion-dollar international fashion industry. And it is rooted in the humble but revolutionary idea, conceived of and first implemented in New York City's Garment District, that fashion is for everyone.

Nancy MacDonell is the author of "Empresses of Seventh Avenue: World War II, New York City and the Birth of American Fashion."

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES. BETTMANN ARCHIVE (2).

GREAT AMERICAN PRODUCTS

COCA-COLA: Born in an Atlanta pharmacy in 1886, Coca-Cola grew from a local curiosity into one of the most recognizable symbols on earth. More than a beverage, it became a language of American optimism: bright red, instantly familiar, carrying the promise of refreshment and possibility. From midcentury diners and roadside billboards to global stadiums and remote villages, Coke has traveled as a cultural ambassador, embodying the friendliness, fun and aspirational ease that defined the American dream. Its script logo, contoured glass bottle and effervescent imagery helped export an idea as powerful as the drink itself: that joy could be shared, opened and passed from hand to hand. *—JS*

Let the bulls run

America's free market system continues to reign supreme

Economic freedom has been critical to the success of the United States — the individual rights enshrined in the Constitution support investors and inventors alike, allowing healthy competition. Despite imperfections, American capitalism has proven again and again that it is a better system for individual and collective wealth than other goverments.

CHARLES GASPARINO

A company that explores the universe and provides access to something called the internet, powered by another revolutionary technology known as artificial intelligence, recently sold stock to the public, rising to a valuation of over $2 trillion.

The venture employs all sorts of people, from engineers to factory workers. More of them will find work after the money it raised from investors, themselves taking a chance on its future, is put to use.

The employees, no doubt, will be buying homes, some mansions. Shareholders are getting rich. They are all living productive lives in a country where such productivity is commonplace because of a system known as capitalism, the only economic system envisioned by our founders 250 years ago.

Quite remarkable. Just think of how many people SpaceX will employ if it really does deliver on its promises of space exploration, if it expands our economy into Mars.

Also remarkable that, in the days since the historic stock sale — the largest IPO ever, in fact — a debate emerged about SpaceX's potential and that humongous valuation. Shares started to zig-zag; management will have to deliver results — such as spaceships that potentially set the stage for a colony on Mars, with AI that helps engineers build that infrastructure — all at a profit, or the company will crash like one of its malfunctioned rockets.

Investors could lose money if it doesn't work out. But they will make more by finding greater appealing ways to direct capital. The employees will find jobs elsewhere. Inevitably, someone will try to make a fortune by building a better mousetrap, aided by investors looking to take a chance and make money, because that's how capitalism works.

And if SpaceX lives up to its touted potential by its great capitalist with a record of delivering on such promises, aka Elon Musk — whose worth soared to $1 trillion — all the better.

Yes, capitalism is a messy business, and so-called creative destruction can be tough on everyone involved. Much like our constitutional democracy, it's imperfect. The "warmth of collectivism," as New York City's foolishly naive current mayor, Zohran Mamdani, has called the alternative, sounds appealing to many lately.

But let's look at what our founders set the stage for through free market capitalism. Collectivism starts out warmly in theory, until it's put into practice: The Stalinist famine unleashed on farmers after Ukraine collectivized agriculture; the dictator's many purges to impose his command and controls; not to mention the years of economic misery that befell the people of the old Soviet Union.

Mao followed this playbook with the same results. China's "great" Cultural Revolution wasn't so great if you were deemed a capitalist pig and perished during his purges. Let's not leave out Pol Pot's Cambodian genocide that began with the grand vision of a class-free society and wiped away all traces of freedom of thought and commerce through re-education camps and the deaths of millions.

Venezuela was once an economic superpower that tried the warmth of collectivism and its people, including the most productive, left in droves as its economy collapsed except for the favored few at the top. The weather is warm in Cuba, but the cold hard facts of Castro's communist revolution continues to impoverish the many, while the few in government live in luxury.

Now let's look at what America's founders gave us, as messy as it was. A constitution that holds supreme individual rights and liberties — so much so that, when it was violated for some, we fought a civil war to set things straight. A system that doesn't divide its people into classes; for every robber baron, there were plenty more wildcat oil men who made their fortune.

Thomas Edison began selling newspapers to support his family when he was 12. By the time he died, he had made a fortune because he was incentivized to do great things, including one of the greatest advancements ever in the development of the lightbulb — without which, Musk would not be venturing to Mars.

There are many more like Edison, people incentivized to build a better lightbulb or ways to transact business or download music. Just ask Jeff Bezos and Steve Jobs, both sons of America's middle class who made it big by making our lives better.

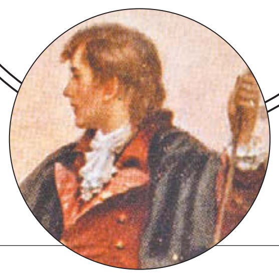
Capitalism — the desire to make money doing something good — has extended life expectancy by decades. It's made the working class more comfortable than ever before. It has allowed the government to create programs to benefit the poor.

Yes, it's imperfect, but it's better than any alternative. Screw with it at your own peril.

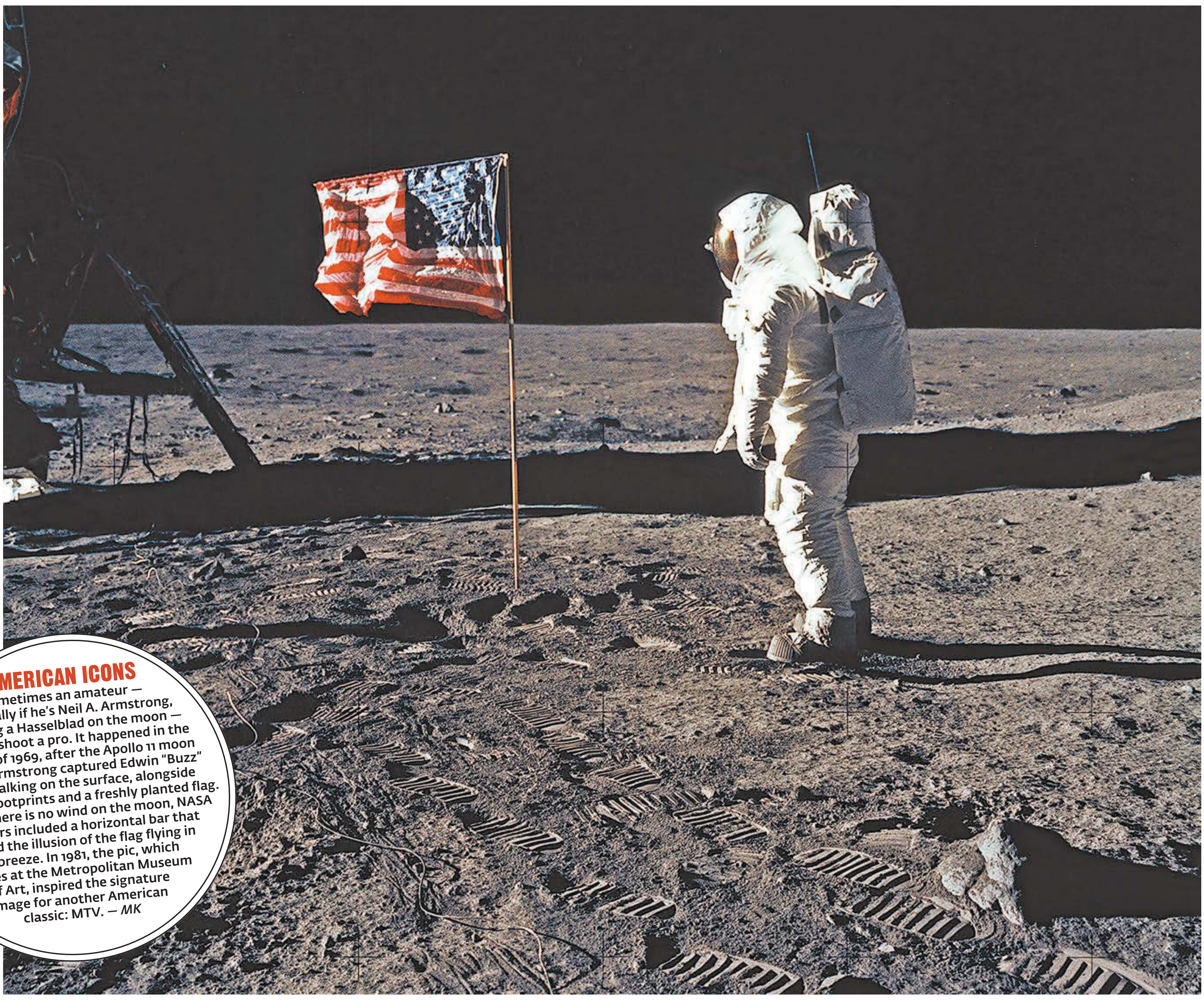
A bunch of very imperfect dudes created this very imperfect economic system that resulted in the greatest, most powerful and prosperous country this world has ever seen. Here's to another 250 years.

AMERICAN ICONS

The "Star-Spangled Banner" began as a poem by American lawyer Francis Scott Key, who was inspired by a massive American flag flying defiantly over Baltimore's Fort McHenry the morning after an intense 25-hour bombardment by British forces during the War of 1812. Originally titled "Defence of Fort M'Henry," it didn't become America's official national anthem until 1931 — after being put to the melody of a popular British drinking song. — *Chris Nesi*



PHOTOS BY PAUL MARTINKA FOR NY POST; CHRISTOPHER SADOWSKI FOR NY POST; BUYENLARGE VIA GETTY IMAGES.



AMERICAN ICONS
Sometimes an amateur — especially if he's Neil A. Armstrong, wielding a Hasselblad on the moon — can out-shoot a pro. It happened in the summer of 1969, after the Apollo 11 moon landing. Armstrong captured Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin walking on the surface, alongside astronaut footprints and a freshly planted flag. Because there is no wind on the moon, NASA engineers included a horizontal bar that created the illusion of the flag flying in the breeze. In 1981, the pic, which resides at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, inspired the signature image for another American classic: MTV. — *MK*

Moon shot

How America ultimately beat the Soviet Union in the great space race

WHAT was once the most important potato field in the world belonged to the Nurskanova family in the town of Engels, in the Saratov region of southwestern Russia. The days moved unremarkably on the farms in Engels, and the morning of April 12, 1961, started out no differently. Not long after breakfast, 5-year-old Rita Nurskanova and her grandmother left their farmhouse and went into the field to tend the potatoes. They had barely begun their day's work when they noticed something strange — an orange-clad man dragging a long parachute on the ground, approaching from a distant part of their property. Rita and her grandmother, alarmed, turned and bolted for the house, but the man called them back.

"Don't be afraid," he said. "I am a Soviet citizen like you, who has descended from space and I must find a telephone to call Moscow."

"Granny, stop!" Rita said. "He's speaking Russian. He's probably human."

And so he was — a particularly noteworthy human. Earlier that morning, at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in the republic of Kazakhstan, the little 5-foot, 2-inch man — a onetime steelworker and fighter pilot in the Soviet air force known as Yuri Gagarin — had climbed into a spacecraft atop a 20-engine Vostok rocket and hurtled into space, completing a single 88-minute orbit of the Earth, reentering the atmosphere and then parachuting from his spacecraft to land on the Nurskanova farm.

The family did let the returning cosmonaut use their phone, and soon the farm was overrun with space agency personnel, government officials and reporters from the official state news agency Tass. The newsmen excitedly broke the story.

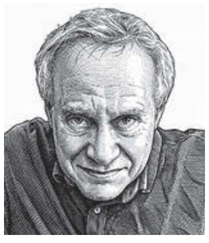
"A great event has taken place," read the initial Tass dispatch. "For the first time in history, man has accomplished a flight into space. The first man to penetrate space was a Soviet man, a citizen of the USSR. By the will of the working class, by the will of the people, and inspired by the party of Communists, headed by Lenin, our country has turned into a most powerful Socialist state and reached unprecedented heights in the development of science and technology."

It was 4 a.m. Eastern time when the history-making news blasted forth from the Soviet Union, and it was thus left to US reporters working the overnight shift to rouse officials out of bed for quotes and reactions. Near Cape Canaveral, the phone rang in the home of John "Shorty" Powers, NASA's chief public affairs officer, who answered it blearily. Confronted with a near-breathless reporter who told him what had happened and asked for a comment, Powers could only mumble, "We're all asleep down here."

A few hours later, the same headline appeared in uncounted newspapers across the country and around the world that carried the wire service report: "SOVIETS PUT MAN IN SPACE. SPOKESMAN SAYS US ASLEEP."

With those ignominious words, the great space race between the US and the Soviet Union — with a manned landing on the moon the ultimate target — truly took flight, and there was no denying the Soviets were in the lead.

Two years before Gagarin's flight, NASA, America's newly formed space agency, had announced the names of its seven original astronauts: Alan Shepard, Gus Grissom, John Glenn, Scott Carpenter, Wally Schirra, Gordon Cooper and Deke Slayton. In those 24 months, the men had trained hard and stumped for NASA hard — marching in Fourth of July parades, touring spacecraft and rocket factories, conducting uncounted press conferences, sitting for interviews with Life Magazine and posing for photo shoots in their slim, silvery spacesuits.



JEFFREY KLUGER

What they hadn't done yet was fly.

That changed on May 5, 1961, when NASA — pressed by the Kennedy administration to answer Gagarin's flight and do it fast — rolled the little 83-foot Redstone rocket topped by the tiny Mercury capsule out to the pad, loaded Shepard into the cockpit, sealed the hatch and sent him aloft. The popgun parabolic flight that carried him went 116 miles up without reaching orbit, followed by a splashdown in the Atlantic Ocean just 17 minutes after liftoff. It wasn't much, but that 116-mile altitude counted as space.

"US Puts Man into Space," trumpeted the Washington Post.

"American Rides Rocket 116 Miles Up," announced the Chicago Daily Tribune.

"A Masterful Performance," applauded the Evening Star, of Washington, DC.

"A flea hop," sniffed Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, whose own spaceman had circled the entire Earth, while the best the Americans could answer with was an up-and-down drop into the drink 300 miles off the coast of Florida.

That was how things would stay for the next three years as NASA pressed cautiously forward with the remaining five flights of the Mercury program, as the one-man capsules progressed from sub-orbitals to three orbitals to six orbitals to 22 orbitals. The Soviets, meanwhile, were launching the first woman into space, the first two-person spacecraft and the first dual-spacecraft missions, and conducting the first walk in space — their more powerful rockets and nimbler capsules regularly outperforming America's men and machines.

But then, the Soviets stalled. Their first eight missions, from 1961 to 1965, had all been in their capable Vostok and Voskhod spacecraft. The next step in their grand cosmic plan was a three-man Vostok spacecraft, with which they would practice the skills needed to get to the moon, including long-duration missions, more spacewalks and rendezvousing and docking with another spacecraft, all in Earth's orbit. Those flights would be followed by manned lunar missions in the long-distance Zond spacecraft.

The Soyuz, however, was a complex — and stubborn — ship, one that defied the talented Soviet designers and engineers. For two years, the Baikonur launch pads would go cold, and in that time, the Americans would surge into the lead with their two-man Gemini spacecraft. In just 20 months' time, from March 1965 to November 1966, 10 Gemini missions would fly, featuring five men taking spacewalks, four crews docking with unmanned target vehicles, two men staying aloft for a then-unheard-of 14 days, and two manned craft — Geminis 6 and 7 — flying in tandem in orbit, approaching to within a meter of each other.

But the good times could not last. For both nations' space programs, things would turn suddenly dark. On Jan. 27, 1967, astronauts Gus Grissom, Ed White and Roger Chaffee — the intended first crew of the Apollo program — would die in a spacecraft fire during a dress rehearsal for launch. "We're burning up!" White could be heard screaming over the radio. Several months later, on April 23, 1967, Soviet cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov would similarly perish in the first test flight of the Soyuz spacecraft, when the ship would overheat and burn during reentry. "You have failed and killed me!" a doomed Komarov shouted to the ground.

Eventually, both the Soyuz and the Apollo would find their footing, with the Soyuz flying successfully nine more times from 1968 to 1971, and the Apollo flying 15 times from 1968 to 1974. Both countries had the ships for the missions, but only one had the rocket power — at least for trips to the moon.

America's lunar rocket was the Saturn 5, a sleek, white machine that put out a thunderous 7.5 million pounds of thrust from its five first-stage engines. The Soviets' answer was the gray-green N1, with a first stage thrust of 10.2 million pounds that easily beat the Saturn. But the Saturn flew straight and flew true.

In December 1968, it carried the crew of Apollo 8 on humanity's first orbital mission around the moon. In May 1969, Apollo 10 returned to the moon with the first test of both the Apollo command module and the lunar lander in lunar orbit. Next up was Apollo 11, set to make the first manned lunar landing in July 1969.

The N1, like the Soyuz before it, was slow in development and slow in assembly. Racing to keep up, the Soviets scheduled a test flight of the 34-story machine topped by an unmanned Zond spacecraft. On the morning of July 3, 1969, the N1 was positioned on the pad and its engines were lit. The rocket rose barely high enough to clear the launch tower before it tipped over and exploded — its 2,300 tons of fuel producing a giant blast and fireball that shattered windows across the Baikonur complex and sent debris flying for 6 miles around. The exhausted Soviets surveyed their melted launch pad and their ruined rocket and knew the game was up.

Thirteen days later, Apollo 11 — carrying astronauts Neil Armstrong, Michael Collins and Buzz Aldrin — lifted off for the moon. Four days after that, Armstrong and Aldrin became the first men on the lunar surface. With that, the cosmic steeplechase ended. The manned space race, joined in a potato field in the spring of 1961, was won in the Sea of Tranquility eight summers later.

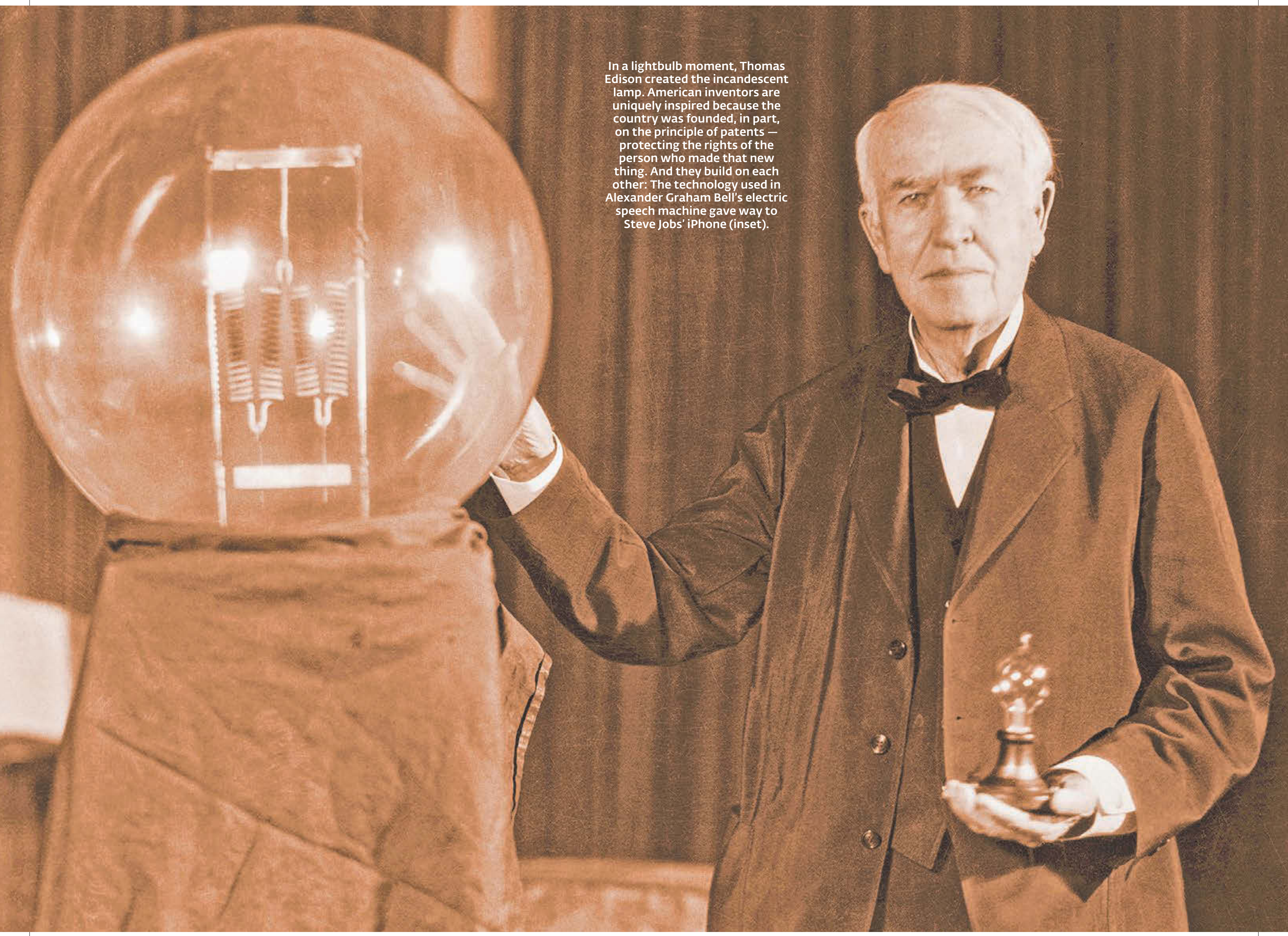
Jeffrey Kluger is editor at large at Time, where he has written more than 45 cover stories. Co-author of "Lost Moon: The Perilous Voyage of Apollo 13," which was the basis for the movie "Apollo 13," he is also the author of 13 other books, including his latest, "Gemini: Stepping Stone to the Moon, the Untold Story."

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES (2).

GREAT AMERICAN PRODUCTS

McDonald's
DRIVE-THRU

MCDONALD'S: Post-World War II, the United States was efficient, confident, friendly, standardized and all about taking over the world. Naturally, Americans were drawn to McDonald's, where fast food was served without needing to turn off the car — and the meal literally declared its happiness. Laying the groundwork for the modern fast-food model, the brand introduced unprecedented convenience, standardization and speed to daily life, ultimately shaping global dietary habits. —*JS*



In a lightbulb moment, Thomas Edison created the incandescent lamp. American inventors are uniquely inspired because the country was founded, in part, on the principle of patents — protecting the rights of the person who made that new thing. And they build on each other: The technology used in Alexander Graham Bell's electric speech machine gave way to Steve Jobs' iPhone (inset).

Innovation nation

From the lightbulb to the airplane, big, bright ideas thrive in the Land of the Free

ON July 31, 1790, President George Washington affixed his elegant signature to a single piece of parchment. The short document credited Samuel Hopkins of Philadelphia with having "discovered an Improvement, not known or used before," in the production of potash, a chemical useful in making fertilizer and other products. The statement granted Mr. Hopkins "the sole and exclusive Right and Liberty of using, and vending to others the said Discovery" for a period of 14 years.

Thus was issued the first US patent. Attorney General Edmund Randolph and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson were also on hand to sign the document. Among all the weighty duties facing Washington and his cabinet, protecting the interests of a little-known inventor might strike us today as rather mundane. But America's founders believed that guarding the rights of innovators was a crucial role of government.

Ratified just two years earlier, the US Constitution directed Congress to "promote the progress of Science and Useful Arts" by securing such rights for inventors and writers. It was "the first time in history that a country's founding document expressly authorize[d] the government to protect patents and copyrights," writes Antonin Scalia Law School professor Adam Mossoff.

The idea of protecting inventors' rights wasn't new. It had been part of English law for centuries. There, however, patents were granted at the pleasure of the king. In contrast, the newly united former colonies awarded patents based on the originality of the invention, not the whims of royalty.

The United States' uniquely democratic approach to intellectual property set off a chain reaction that drives innovation to this day. By 1836, nearly 10,000 inventions had received patent protection; that number passed the 1 million mark in 1911. Today, more than 12 million US patents are on the books.

America is the land of invention. Not surprisingly, many early patents involved agriculture. Cyrus McCormick's mechanical grain reaper (1834) began the mechanization of farming; John Deere's steel plow (1837) helped pioneers bust through thick prairie sod. Eli Whitney's even earlier invention of the cotton gin (1794) showed how technical breakthroughs can have unexpected consequences.

By making it easier to process raw cotton, Whitney's machine made cotton farming fabulously profitable. That, in turn, increased the demand for slaves to work the booming plantations. So, as northern states agitated to end slavery, the South tightened its grip on the "peculiar institution," helping push the nation toward the Civil War.

At the same time, America's culture of invention also opened doors for free black Americans. In 1821, Thomas Jennings, a New York tailor's apprentice, became the first African American to secure a patent for his pioneering method of dry cleaning. Other black patent holders included Sarah Boon, who designed the modern ironing board (1892); Garret Morgan, who, after witnessing a car crash, developed the green-yellow-red traffic light we still use today (1923); and Elijah McCoy, who earned dozens of patents, including one for an automatic steam engine lubricator (1872). McCoy's precise, reliable lubricators are said to be the origin of the term "the real McCoy."

JAMES B. MEIGS

As America's innovation juggernaut gathered steam, inventors came to be seen in a heroic light. Painter-turned-entrepreneur Robert Fulton developed the world's first commercially viable steamboat, which began plying New York's Hudson River in 1807. Able to motor against the current — even on the mighty Mississippi — Fulton's steamboats revolutionized transportation. Suddenly, America's vast interior was open for business.

In Europe, status was still largely determined by hereditary class. In democratic America, technological innovators like Fulton formed a new kind of aristocracy, one representing the future rather than the musty past. Even today, dozens of streets, counties and towns carry Fulton's name.

Fulton wasn't the only inventor focused on moving people and goods. After all, America is a big country. In 1862, George Westinghouse patented an automatic railroad brake that allowed longer, faster trains to operate safely. Elisha Otis applied a similar insight to vertical travel: His fail-safe elevator brake (1852) reshaped city skylines by making skyscrapers feasible. The transportation revolution literally took off when the Wright brothers' hand-crafted airplane first flew in 1903. Humble bicycle mechanics, the Wrights had no formal training. But they applied a scientific mindset to their project, including building one of the world's first wind tunnels to test their designs.

Henry Ford's genius did not lie in trying to build the world's best car. Rolls-Royce and others already made finely crafted automobiles for wealthy buyers. Ford instead created a revolutionary factory, one in which moderately skilled workers could build a sturdy, reliable car at a price most Americans could afford. Introduced in 1908, Ford's Model T offered mobility to the masses, which, in turn, transformed the American lifestyle. For better or worse, the car-centric suburb was born.

US inventors also led the way in what today we call information technology. In 1840, Samuel Morse improved a process to send small jolts of electricity down a wire and invented a code to turn those blips into words. Telegraph lines — or what Morse called "lightning wires" — soon crisscrossed the country. Control over such a vital invention could be enormously profitable. Morse's long legal battle to defend his patent rights led all the way to the Supreme Court, where he lost in a still-controversial 1854 decision.

Alexander Graham Bell's 1875 patent for his invention of the first practical telephone also faced legal challenges. Almost unbelievably, another inventor had submitted his similar telephone design to the patent office on the same day. The battle raged for years, but Bell ultimately prevailed.

Inventor Thomas Edison was lionized for his many inventions, including the lightbulb, the phonograph and motion-picture camera. But the "Wizard of Menlo Park" was also notoriously litigious, launching endless legal battles against rival electricity innovator George Westinghouse and other competitors. As the age of invention marched into the 20th century, it sometimes seemed that patent lawyers were getting most of the spoils.

By the end of World War II, America's culture of innovation had changed. Most breakthroughs were no longer the work of lone tinkerers like Whitney. Now, big inventions required teamwork, often supported by the military or large corporations. In 1947, a group of Bell Labs engineers found a way to manipulate electrical currents using tiny crystals. The transistor was born, and the Electronics Age was off and running.

The breakthroughs started coming like clockwork: The integrated circuit (1959) allowed multiple transistors to be placed on a single chip. Those microchips became the building blocks of vastly more powerful computers. In 1976, Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs showed they could use off-the-shelf components to build the home computer they named Apple I. Before long, we had the Worldwide Web, the dot-com era and all the rest.

In 2007, Apple changed the world again by combining over a century's worth of breakthroughs in a single device, the iPhone. It's been estimated that a single smartphone relies on some 250,000 patents. Experts now worry innovation might be stymied by litigation-choked "patent thickets."

Today, we are entering another era of technological disruption as artificial intelligence gallops forward. Like the cotton gin, the automobile or the Internet, AI will bring unimaginable advances, and no doubt, unanticipated challenges. But, if history is any guide, America's spirit of innovation will carry us through.

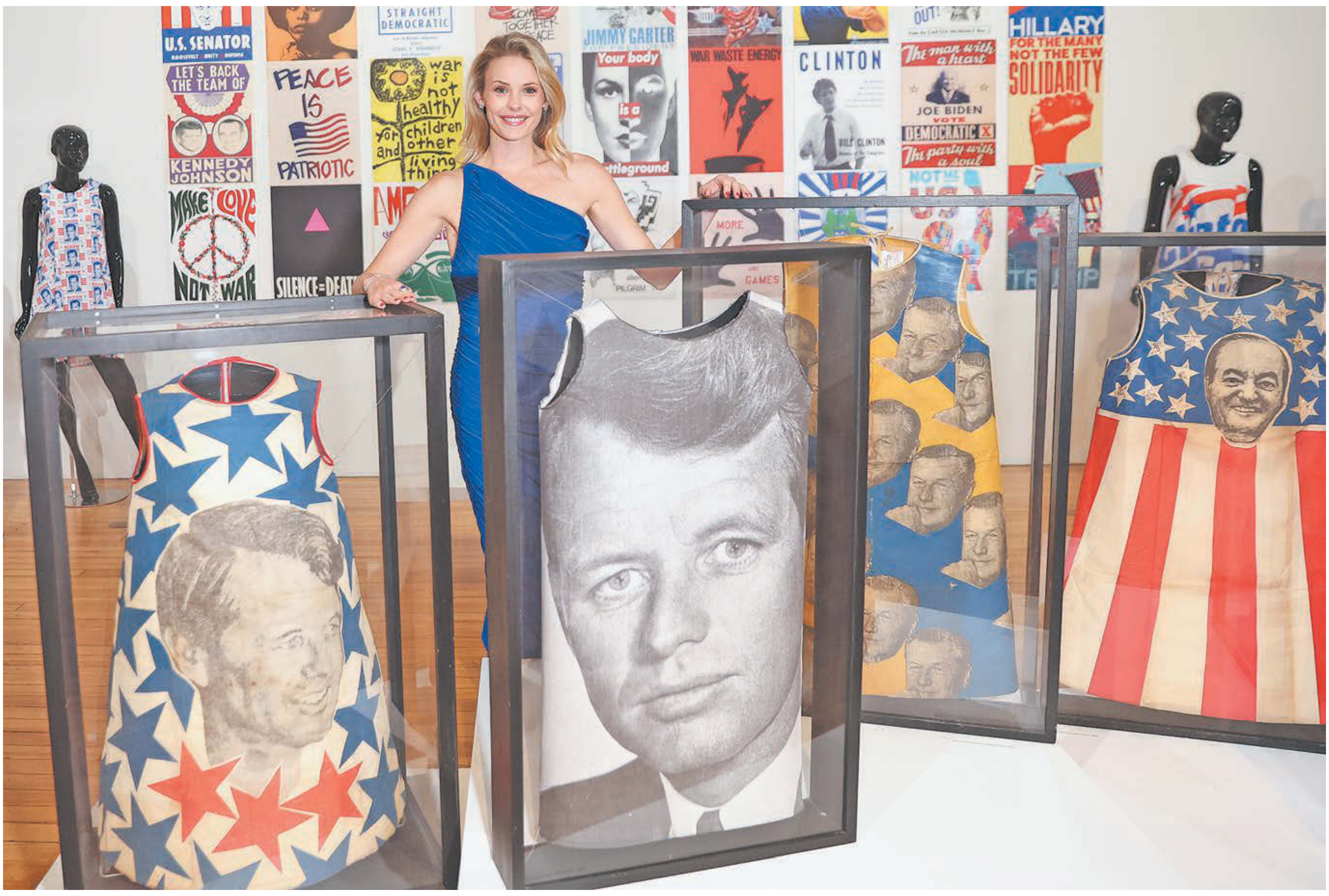
James B. Meigs is the former editor of Popular Mechanics magazine and columnist for the Wall Street Journal's Free Expression newsletter.

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES (3). BETTMANN ARCHIVE.

GREAT AMERICAN PRODUCTS

APPLE: From MacBooks to iPods to the iPhone, today's world is largely dependent on one company's incredible influence. In the mid-1970s, Apple began as a startup in a garage in Los Altos, Calif., where co-founder Steve Jobs fostered an idea that would shape the world. Although not a software developer, he knew how to chase a vision and bring people into his orbit, leading to Apple becoming both innovative and cool. *— JS*

Preserve notice

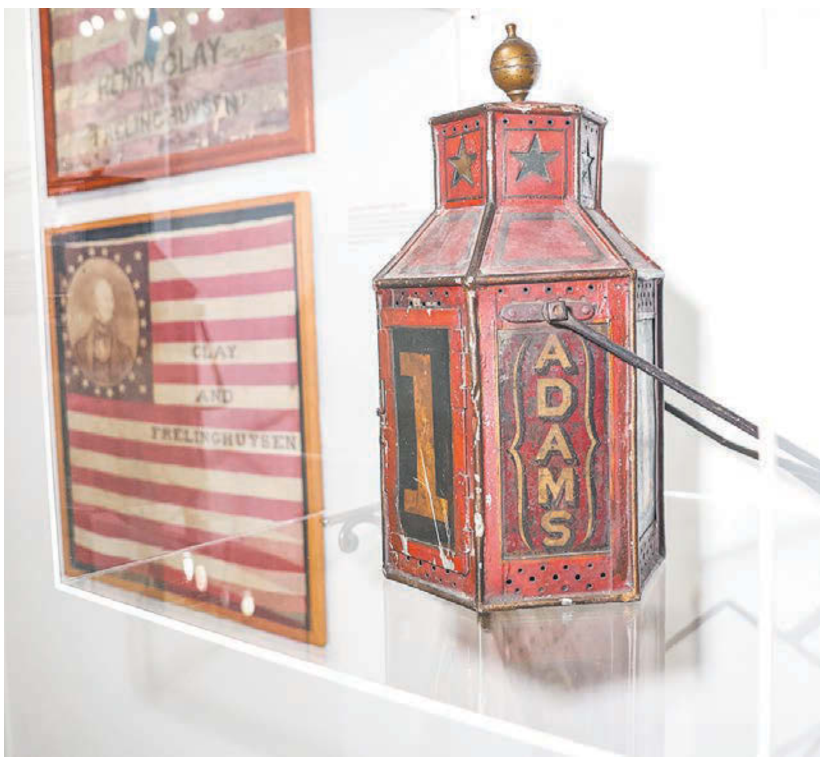


The history of the United States of America can be seen in person, thanks to collectors of Americana like Madison Wright (above). Such “authentic history” — from novelty merch made for political campaigns, protest posters and copies of the Magna Carta to Revolutionary War muskets and Vietnam War-era battle flags — shows how today’s Americans are connected by our past.

These collectors have turned American history into an art form

BY MICHAEL KAPLAN

AS America reaches its 250th anniversary, it’s good to remember that the history of our country is told through words, deeds and artifacts. The latter, which shake out as illuminating Americana, rank among the most tangible links to our glorious timeline — going from the American Revolution to the freeing of slaves to women gaining the right to vote to all 45 presidents.



“Americana represents authentic history,” Louise Mirrer, president and CEO of the New York Historical, told The Post. “Artifacts tell us what people were thinking about or saying or doing. People took the time to preserve these materials over the last 250 or more years, and they tell us about our past that binds us together. That’s a really important message for today.”

These collectors help tell America’s story with flags, documents, militaria and presidential memorabilia.

A COLLECTION OF PRESIDENTIAL PROPORTIONS

In 1968, when Robert F. Kennedy was running for the Democratic party’s presidential nomination, a 10-year-old kid named Jordan Wright visited the senator’s New York headquarters and scored a campaign button. That set him off on a mission.

“His whole collection literally started with a button,” Jordan’s daughter-in-law Madison Wright told The Post (Jordan died, at age 50, in 2008). “He got bitten by the bug and, over the next 40 years, grew the collection to 1.3 million objects.”

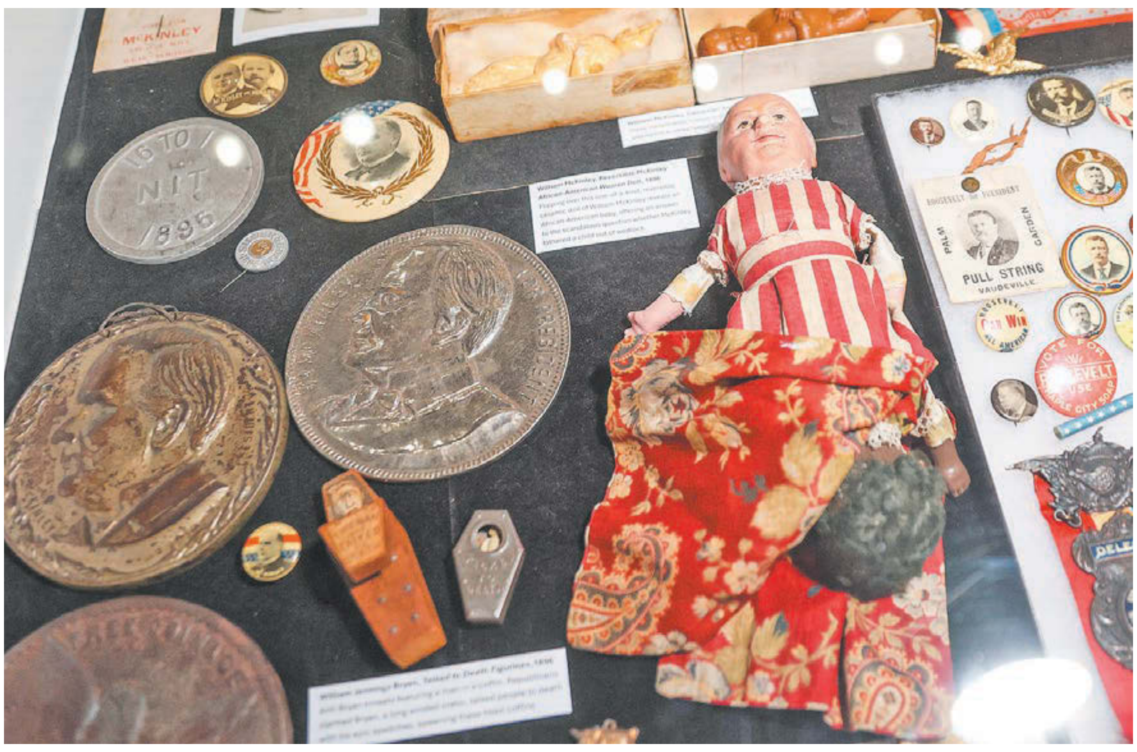
Items range from the brass and copper buttons given out at the first 1789 inauguration of George Washington to 1917 ballots related to giving women the right to vote in New York to a toothpaste-smeared robe that Richard M. Nixon wore while padding around the White House in 1974, the year that he resigned.

The Museum of Democracy’s collection, pieces of which are currently on display at the Southampton Arts Center through July 18, includes an entire category of election-campaign swag.

There are paper minidresses that hype-women wore to fire up rally crowds for Nixon, Robert Kennedy, Nelson Rockefeller and Hubert Humphrey, as well as lanterns given out by John Adams. Some memorabilia is shocking: Tiny coffins were meant to remind voters that William Jennings Bryan was so boring he could talk them to death, while dolls represented an African-American child that William McKinley allegedly had out of wedlock. “Nobody likes the fat man” buttons were a dis to William Taft.

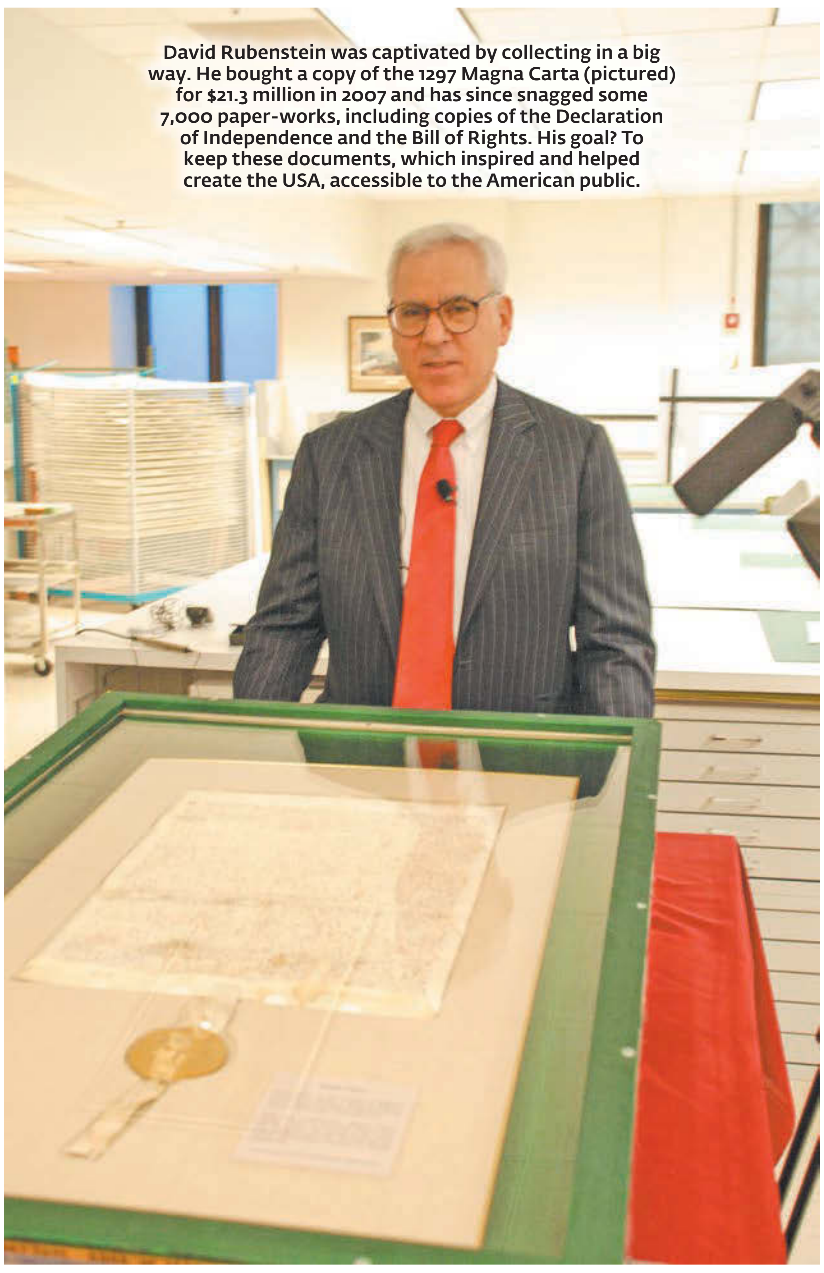
“The personal attacks were brutal,” said Wright, who oversees the collection with her mother-in-law Pamala Wright. “You found something you didn’t like about your competitor and used it to swing the vote.”

Wright sees her family as “stewards of political history. We’ve all read about history in textbooks, but seeing this memorabilia brings it to life.”



Madison Wright (left), whose late father-in-law collected more than a million items of political memorabilia, now oversees the massive assortment and says she views her family as “stewards of political history.” The collection includes Richard Nixon’s bathrobe, a lantern handed out by John Adams (top) and a doll mocking William McKinley for an alleged African-American love child (above). There are also commemorative coins and campaign buttons, dating back to George Washington’s 1789 inauguration.

PHOTOS BY HEATHER KHALIFA FOR NY POST.



David Rubenstein was captivated by collecting in a big way. He bought a copy of the 1297 Magna Carta (pictured) for $21.3 million in 2007 and has since snagged some 7,000 paper-works, including copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. His goal? To keep these documents, which inspired and helped create the USA, accessible to the American public.

DOCUMENTING HISTORY

When David Rubenstein began collecting documents, he did not start small. His quest launched in 2007, when he bought a stamped Magna Carta at Sotheby's for $21.3 million.

"It was the one copy in private hands," Rubenstein told The Post of the 1297 English charter of rights. "I thought it would be good to keep the document that inspired the Declaration of Independence and our Constitution in the United States. I bought it and put it on permanent display at the National Archives."

From there, Rubenstein was hooked. He snagged nine of the rare 1823 facsimiles of the Declaration of Independence (the original, in the National Archives, is faded beyond readability), two Lincoln-signed copies of the Emancipation Proclamation and a 1789 broadside printing of the Bill of Rights.

And he shares: Much of the collection — 7,000 paper-works strong — is in museums and archives and even baseball stadiums. The idea is for as many people as possible to view the documents that made America great.

Having earned his fortune a co-founder of the Carlyle Group, Rubenstein, who owns the Baltimore Orioles, acknowledges that "when you own something that was signed by Abraham Lincoln or George Washington, it's a nice thrill."

He also loves to share the stories behind the docs — like how Abraham Lincoln needed to wait two hours to sign the Emancipation Proclamation because he was numb from shaking hands all day and did not want the signature to look tentative.

For all that, Rubenstein — who donated some $18.5 million to the recently opened museum under the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC — admits that he has a white whale.

"There are five copies of the Gettysburg Address," he said. "One is at Cornell University, one is at the White House, one is at the Lincoln Library and two are at the Library of Congress. They're never going to be sold. But there are lots of places to look at them. And that is the important thing."

BRINGING THE FRONTLINE HOME

Don Troiani's collection has seen its share of action.

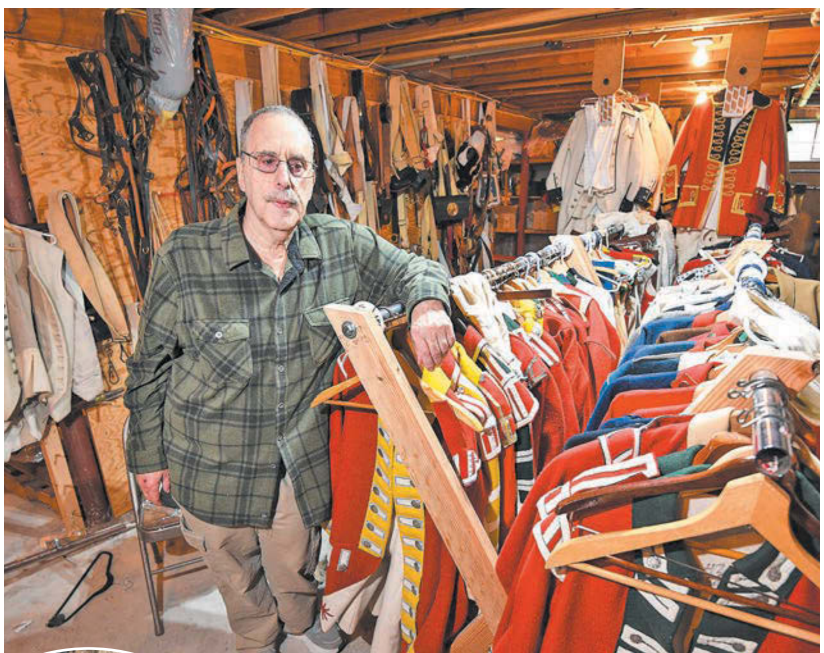
From the American Revolutionary War through World War II, it includes weapons, muskets, helmets and uniforms — many of which tell tragic tales. Like the paratrooper jacket worn at Operation Market Garden, a famous World War II maneuver that inspired the 1977 movie "A Bridge Too Far."

"I think the owner of the jacket was injured at Market Garden," Troiani told The Post, referring to the operation that landed Allied troops behind German lines to capture strategic bridges. "The jacket has two names on it. So, somebody got the jacket after Market Garden and took over wearing it."

A Revolutionary War musket, likely used in the Whittemore Incident in 1775, has a remarkable story. "A guy in his 80s was fighting off a large force of the British all by himself. He was bayoneted and had his head bashed in" — but survived, Troiani said. "Britain's 47th regiment was attacking him. This is one of the guns from the regiment, which was later taken by the Americans and used against the British. It's branded 'United States' while '47th regiment' is engraved on the barrel."

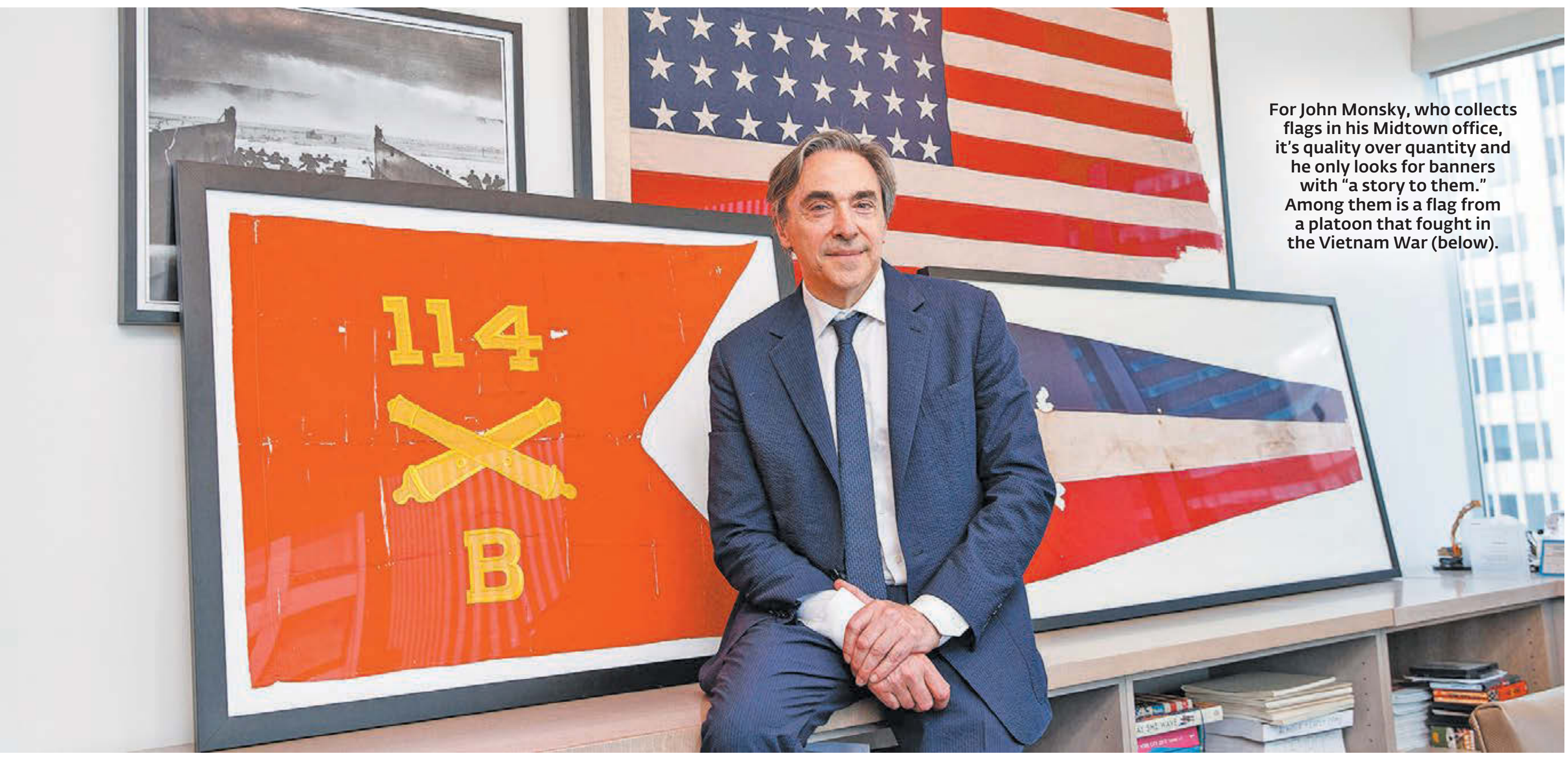
While some collectors of Americana like to make their purchases at auction, Troiani, who also paints historical battle scenes, does not mind getting his hands dirty, even bringing a metal detector to construction sites at former military camps.

He came across a key find — a regimental coat from the American Revolution — after being invited to go through a stranger's closet. "Only four or five of them exist," he said, adding that his is on loan to the US Army National Museum. "I was looking for World War II stuff from the brother of the woman who had it … They had the coat hanging with kids' winter jackets."



AIRBORNE
AA

Weaponry and other items of war make up Don Troiani's collection, from the uniforms of British soldiers during the Revolutionary War (above) to a musket from 1756 (left). He also has a World War II paratrooper jacket (inset left), which dates to Allied troops' Operation Market Garden.



For John Monsky, who collects flags in his Midtown office, it's quality over quantity and he only looks for banners with "a story to them." Among them is a flag from a platoon that fought in the Vietnam War (below).

FLYING THE FLAG FOR AMERICA

Walk into the Midtown Manhattan office of John Monsky, a partner with the investment firm Oak Hill Capital, and you are immediately wowed by two flags in frames: one with the edges frayed, the other with holes ripped through it.

"I've been told by the conservators that the holes are from shrapnel," Monsky told The Post. "This flag was on a landing craft at Omaha Beach on D-Day. The beach became a shooting gallery."

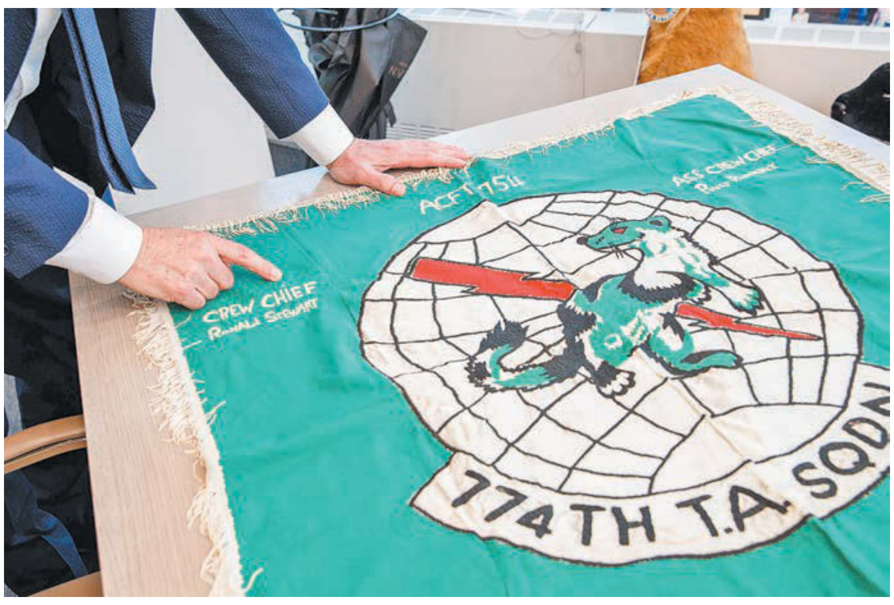
As for the frayed edges, also a remnant from a craft en route to the famous World War II battle, Monsky added, "The wind flapped really hard and tore the ends."

Those flags are among 80 or so in his collection. "I'm very focused on quality, not quantity," said Monsky who started scoring them as a kid in Florida. "I'm only trying to acquire flags that have a story to them."

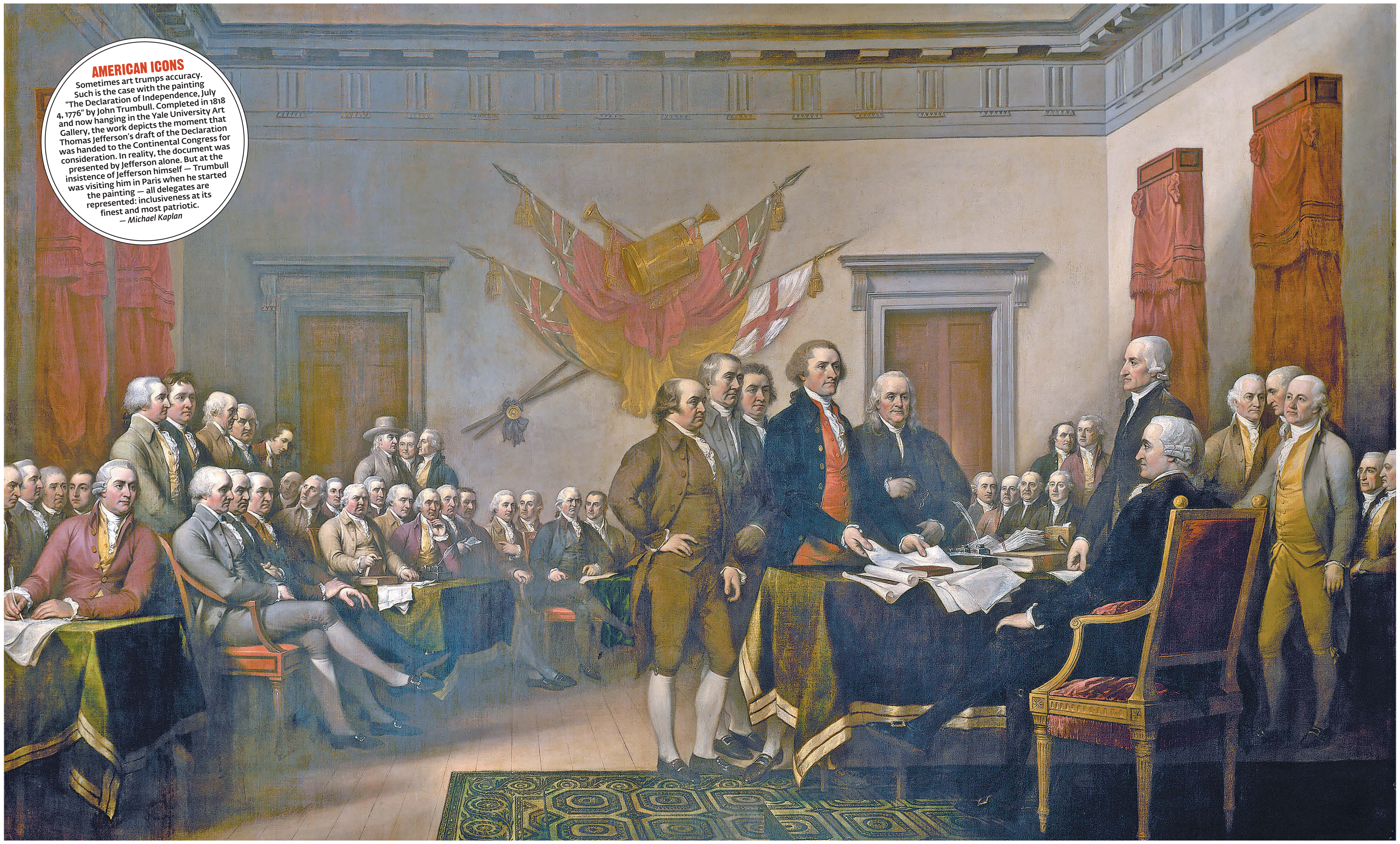
Some memorialize black militias during World War II or platoons that fought in the Vietnam War. He has swatches from the American flag that the Apollo XI astronauts planted on the moon. (The bulk of it remains on the lunar surface, albeit mostly bleached out.)

He also has a banner that Martha Washington had made for her husband, George. "It was 1775 and they had to come up with a flag," said Monsky. "Nobody knew what to do" — so the printer put forth potential designs.

"There's a flag of 13 stripes, don't tread upon me, a pine tree and a pinwheel with 13 legs," said Monsky, of the oldest and rarest item in his collection. "They're trying. Then, later, with 13 stars — which was Washington's personal banner — and 13 stripes, you see the man meeting the country through a flag."



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW MCDERMOTT FOR NY POST (3); TAMARA BECKWITH/NY POST (2); COURTESY DAVID M. RUBENSTEIN.



AMERICAN ICONS

Sometimes art trumps accuracy. Such is the case with the painting "The Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776" by John Trumbull. Completed in 1818 and now hanging in the Yale University Art Gallery, the work depicts the moment that Thomas Jefferson's draft of the Declaration was handed to the Continental Congress for consideration. In reality, the document was presented by Jefferson alone. But at the insistence of Jefferson himself — Trumbull was visiting him in Paris when he started the painting — all delegates are represented: inclusiveness at its finest and most patriotic.

— Michael Kaplan

The promise of America

The Founding Fathers didn't just make liberty a democratic claim. They expected we would continue their argument

THERE'S a moment in our film "The American Revolution" when the historian Jane Kamensky, now president of Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello, reflects on the lasting meaning of the war: "Everybody, on every side, including people denied even the ownership of themselves, had the sense of possibility worth fighting for."

That line captures something essential about the Revolution that can get lost beneath the familiar portraits and marble monuments. The Revolution was not only a war for independence but also an argument about possibility — who counted, who belonged and whether so-called ordinary people could claim ownership over their own lives and their own future.

In 1776, citizenship itself was a radical idea. Most human beings in history had been subjects. On the eastern edge of British North America, a group of imperfect, ambitious, often contradictory people began to imagine something different: that legitimacy might flow upward from the people rather than downward from a throne.

KEN BURNS

At first, of course, that promise applied only to a narrow few, mostly white men with property. But once the language of liberty entered the world, it could not be contained, especially as more and more people were called up to fight and support the war. As the war was fought and won, as much by so-called ordinary people — teenagers and those who didn't own property — who knew they were as deserving of the blessings of liberty as the elites meeting in Philadelphia.

That is the unfinished genius of the American founding. It created this sense of possibility for more and more people, a standard larger than the people who first proclaimed it.

No figure embodies that sense of American possibility more fully than Benjamin Franklin.

Without George Washington, as historians Annette Gordon-Reed and Christopher Brown told me and my collaborators in our film, there is no US. He is the indispensable man of the Revolution. But if anyone shares that title, it is Franklin.

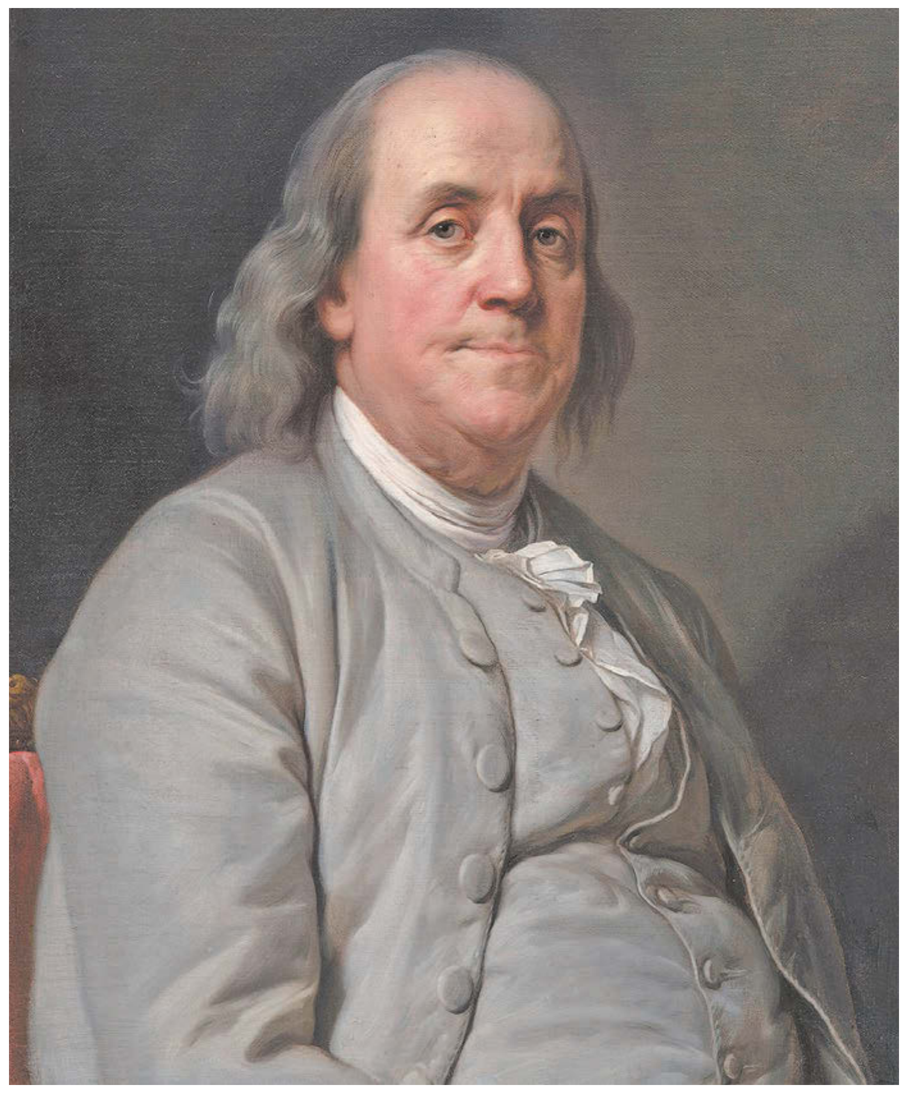
Franklin is older than the other Founders and, in many ways, more recognizably American. He is not born into the Virginia gentry like Thomas Jefferson, nor does he possess the inherited standing of a Boston lawyer like John Adams.

He is born in Boston, the son of a candle maker. He is, for a time, effectively indentured to his own brother in a printing shop. He runs away to Philadelphia with almost nothing. He arrives with little more than intelligence, appetite and the dangerous belief that a person might make himself into someone new.

He is a printer, then a publisher, then a writer. He becomes a scientist, astonishing Europe by proving that lightning and electricity obey the same laws. He invents practical things like the lightning rod, bifocals and the Franklin stove, finding in their usefulness a sense of civic virtue. He builds libraries, hospitals, volunteer fire departments and civic associations. He understands that private ambition without public obligation is just vanity.

Long before independence, Franklin warned that the colonies would fail if they could not imagine themselves as one people. His famous "Join, or Die" cartoon is remembered now as a clever image, but it was a profound political argument about the power of Union, something that was essential to the success of the Revolution, as it would be to the strength of the country almost a century later and today as well.

We live in another fractured American moment, one full of distrust, anger and the easy temptation of cynicism. We speak constantly about rights and far less about obligations. We celebrate freedom but often resist the real work that makes freedom sustainable: shared sacrifice, civic participation, the discipline of self-government.



Benjamin Franklin made a change to the Declaration of Independence that would become one of the greatest edits in American history: turning "sacred" into "self-evident."

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES (2).

Franklin would have recognized that danger immediately.

He understood that democracy is not self-executing. It depends on habits of citizenship and ongoing improvement, something the Founders thought of as virtue: reading, arguing, serving, compromising, building. Republics fail when people decide politics is something done by other people, somewhere else.

He also understood contradiction because he lived it.

Franklin owned enslaved people in his household as a younger man. He benefited from a system he later came to condemn. Over time, he changed. By the end of his life, he became president of the Pennsylvania Abolition Society and submitted one of the earliest anti-slavery petitions to Congress.

His story reminds us that the American story is not one of purity, but of moral struggle. The Founders were not saints, nor should we pretend they were.

They were human beings with all the complexity and blemishes that we see in human beings today.

Franklin appears again at the Constitutional Convention in the summer of 1787 as an old man. He helps forge compromises that are both genius and tragic. The Constitution that emerges is a magnificent achievement and a morally compromised one, preserving the evil of slavery even as it creates the framework for self-government.

And yet even there, Franklin offers one of the clearest windows into the American character, and his own: not perfection, but persistence. The belief that flawed human beings can still build durable institutions.

There is a famous small moment in the drafting of the Declaration of Independence that says a great deal. Jefferson wrote that "we hold these truths to be sacred and undeniable." Franklin suggested a change: "self-evident."

It is one of the greatest edits in history. "Sacred" asks for belief. "Self-evident" demands recognition.

Franklin transformed liberty from a theological claim into a democratic one. Rights were not gifts from kings. They belonged naturally to human beings because reason itself made them obvious, even when they may not appear obvious at all. There was nothing self-evident about equality in 1776. There still isn't. That is precisely why the phrase matters.

Frederick Douglass would later make that same argument when he asked what the Fourth of July meant to those denied its promise. He condemned the hypocrisy of the nation, but he did not abandon the founding principles. He demanded that we honor them.

Franklin's life is a magnificent performance as a human being. He doesn't fire a gun in anger, but his weapon — his tongue and his mind and his heart and his understanding — is that the cause, as he says, is not just for us; it's for everybody. What's so extraordinary about the Founders — Jefferson, Adams, Washington and Franklin — is they are talking about us all the way through.

The Founders are not asking us to worship them. If anything, they would probably distrust that impulse. They are asking us to continue the argument they began, namely, to widen the definition of "We the People," to make real what was only partially imagined, to insist that liberty belongs not to the lucky few but to all of us.

And so, as we commemorate — and celebrate — our founding 250 years later, the responsibility of all these images and all these faces staring back at us is really a pretty accurate mirror that is asking, What are you going to do? How will you take this possibility that is America and make it better?

Old flame

The Statue of Liberty is the greatest gift one country ever gave another

Before the Statue of Liberty became an enduring symbol of hope and freedom for immigrants (like children fleeing the Nazis in Austria, below right), she was envisioned as a marker of the United States' centennial and the nation's friendship with France. The effort behind her construction involved a search across the United States for the right location — with New York City's Bedloe Island deemed the perfect spot — and public donations from both countries.

AMERICAN ICONS

As detailed in the song "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story" from "Hamilton," Eliza Hamilton, widow of Post founder Alexander, was instrumental in securing funds for the construction of the Washington Monument, which began in 1848. But the group behind it went bankrupt in 1854, the same year Eliza died. That, compounded by the start of the Civil War, stalled the obelisk as a 156-foot stub for more than two decades. It was finally finished in 1884 and, at 555 feet, was the world's tallest structure until the Eiffel Tower surpassed it four years later. — *CN*

DIANE VON FURSTENBERG

LADY Liberty means so much to so many people.

For me, growing up in Europe, she was always a beautiful postcard. But my relationship with her changed drastically when I joined the board of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation. I was initially very reluctant to join, but President Stephen Briganti seduced me to change my mind by highighting a very personal passage from my memoir, "The Woman I Wanted to Be."

My mother, Lily, had survived a war concentration camp, and I was born 18 months after she came home. In my book, I wrote about how she used to say, "God saved me so I can give you life. By giving you life, you gave me mine back. You are my torch of freedom."

Stephen reminded me of those poignant words from my mother — and made it seem like destiny. I had to accept. Saying yes meant that I would have to help raise $100 million for the island's new 26,000-square-foot museum, a showcase for the original torch.

We actually accomplished that goal and the museum opened in 2019. In getting there, I embarked on a meaningful journey and learned the fascinating history behind America's great symbol of freedom.

I went to France to meet the family of Gustave Eiffel, who built the skeletal framework inside the iconic statue. I also visited sculptor Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi's museum in Colmar to understand more about how Lady Liberty arrived into this world.

While the statue has evolved into an international welcome mat for immigrants, she was originally conceived by French historian Édouard Rene Laboulaye to commemorate our nation's centennial and abolition of slavery. He wanted to give the United States a gift from France, as a symbol of the countries' long-standing friendship. Laboulaye tapped Bartholdi both for his talents and their shared belief in Enlightenment values.

Interestingly enough, Bartholdi first imagined her as an Arabic woman holding a lighthouse to watch over the Suez Canal, but his proposal was rejected. However, his original design was not wasted. He adapted her into what we now know as the Statue of Liberty.

In preparation for creating her, Bartholdi arrived in New York City on June 21, 1871, and laid eyes on her future home: Bedloe Island.

"This small island appears to be the ideal spot," he wrote in his diary of Bedloe, which was being used by the military. On that trip, Bartholdi traveled across the Northeast meeting luminaries to gather support. He also went across the American heartland all the way to California before returning to New York and reaffirming his belief that the tiny piece of land was the right one.

His instincts were impeccable. In February 1877, Congress finally approved the use of the island.

Its location was so perfect, that at the 1886 dedication, a member of the French delegation remarked, "The island was created for Bartholdi's statue rather than the statue for the island."

But before the Statue of Liberty was erected, there was the wrinkle of paying for this beautiful gift.

In 1875, Laboulaye formed the Franco-American Union to promote and fund this enormous effort. Both sides, in the spirit of cooperation and friendship, agreed that France would pay for the copper statue's construction and transportation to America by selling subscriptions. The United States would foot the bill for the pedestal from which Lady Liberty would look out over New York Harbor.

As it took form, pieces of the statue toured the world to raise excitement — and money. Her head was shown at the 1878 World's Fair in Paris, while her arm holding the torch stood alone in Manhattan's Madison Square Park from 1876 to 1882.

Publisher Joseph Pulitzer enlisted the help of the public, promising that all donors, large and small, would have their names printed in his paper, the New York World. It was a spectacular crowdfunding endeavor from both the French and the Americans. The statue is from the people. And I truly love that about her. The effort to create her came from the heart, and it got the public involved.

Once Bartholdi was finished, Lady Liberty was broken down into 200 pieces, shipped across the ocean and assembled on Bedloe Island, which would become Liberty Island. As Bartholdi wished, she was ready to "light up the world." In 1903, Emma Lazarus' poem "The New Colossus" — with its now-famous line "Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free" — was added to a plate inside the base.

A century and a half on, she continues to transcend.

The statue's likeness is ubiquitous across pop culture and advertising. In one Levi's ad, she's wearing red, white and blue jeans. In a New York Cares PSA from the late '90s, she's depicted shivering to encourage the public to donate coats for the needy.

She's graced postage stamps, comic books and children's book covers like "Babar Comes to America." In Hollywood, she is used frequently on movie posters — for dystopian films like "Planet of the Apes" and in hopeful ones like the animated "An American Tail."

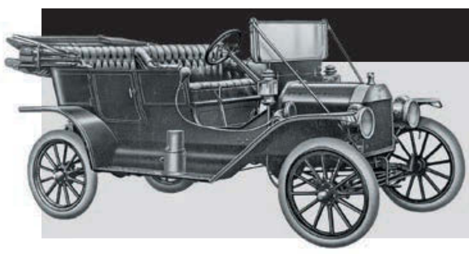
In other words, Lady Liberty is visual shorthand for our dynamic country and its promise of freedom. She isn't merely a stodgy statue mired in another era. She is timeless. And yes, also chic enough for fashion's biggest night. Two days before we opened the museum, I attended the Met Gala dressed as her — wearing a crown and a draped gown and holding a torch.

In 1969, before I introduced the DVF wrap dress, I had sailed to this country by boat so that I could have time to truly think about my future and strategize my business. I remember first setting eyes on the Statue of Liberty: I had arrived.

In the years since, I have lived my American dream. I'm happy that I have been able to get to truly know Lady Liberty, inside and out. If you made a visual recollection of my life, she would certainly be in it. I imagine countless others share this sentiment.

She's more than an image on a postcard to me now. I consider Lady Liberty a friend.

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES. BETTMANN ARCHIVE.



GREAT AMERICAN PRODUCTS

HENRY FORD & THE MODEL T: When the first Ford Model T hit the streets, there was no going back. Henry Ford's automobile would forever change not just American innovation but the global economy — shifting the car from a luxury toy for the wealthy into an everyday essential for the middle class. His invention would also soon lead to innovations in everything from modern trucking to shipping lines to highway construction through the use of vertical integration. — *JS*

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The New Wave

Looking to our future, Marc Andreessen is riding a swell of American optimism

Silicon Valley is the land of revolution — and venture capitalist Marc Andreessen (inset) is investing in America's future through Saronic's boat drones that aim to modernize defense tech, the Infinite Machine scooter, Alpha School's AI-centric education and Wandercraft's prosthetic exoskeletons.

ON America's 250th birthday, venture capitalist and Silicon Valley kingmaker Marc Andreessen is shamelessly optimistic about our country — and making the same audacious bet the Founding Fathers did: that our nation's best days are ahead.

But today's American revolution is technology, and the danger isn't primarily from foreign rivals but the country handicapping its own builders.

"We're the best country in the world," Andreessen told The Post. "The idea that America has both the level of size and scope and solidity and resources that we have, but that we still have that level of risk-taking spirit in the country … is a really, really special combination."

LYDIA MOYNIHAN

And he's evangelizing optimism to the one place that sometimes seems strangely short on it: Silicon Valley.

Much of the tech world has become mired in doomerism, with the engineers who are creating the future convinced the very thing they are building — artificial intelligence — is apocalyptic and destructive.

Andreessen rejects that cynicism as, at least partly, performative and thinks expelling it is key to bettering our future.

"Negativity always sounds more sophisticated than positivity," he said. "If you're optimistic, "you're naive, you're gullible." But if you're pessimistic? "You're worldly and you're sophisticated and you're wise."

That view also lined up with the self-interest of big AI companies that are encouraging more regulation. A government-built moat, Andreessen explains, may be the best defense a company can have — and the surest way to block innovators desperately trying to catch up.

"One-hundred percent, there's a regulatory capture element to it," Andreessen said. "And they're driving hard for that."

That doom, and the push to regulate that inevitably follows, is what he sees as one of the biggest threats to America's next quarter-century.

"The economy," he said, "could be growing at three times this current rate with a different set of policy choices" — and a century ago, it did.

What changed isn't the country's capacity, it is the regulatory burden. "We not only have ankle weights, we've got knee weights and arm weights, one arm tied behind our back — blindfolded and oxygen-deprived," Andreessen said.

The 54-year-old has made a career of betting correctly on the future. He co-founded Netscape, which helped bring the internet to American homes and businesses, and later built Andreessen Horowitz into one of Silicon Valley's most powerful venture firms. The firm (aka A16z) has backed many of today's multi-billion (and trillion) dollar companies, including SpaceX, Anduril, Coinbase, Stripe and OpenAI.

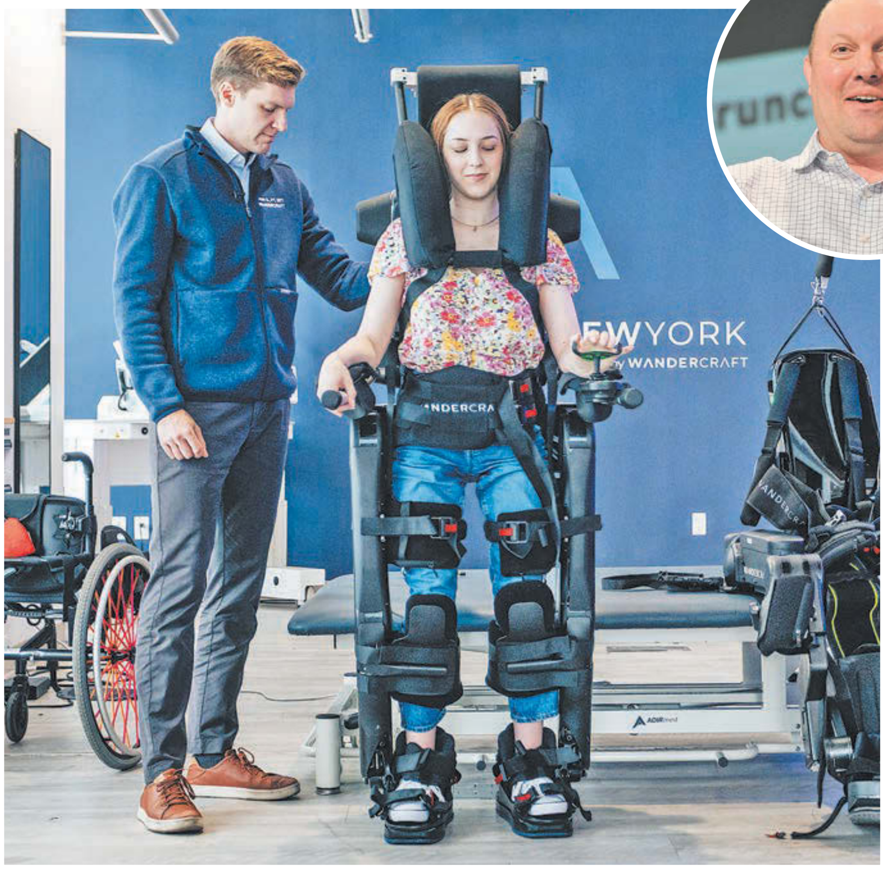
Andreessen, who was early to bet on the internet and AI, sees his work, more generally, as betting on American innovation. In an essay, "It's Time to Build," that he wrote just weeks into pandemic lockdowns, he evangelized about the importance of creating and manufacturing in our own country — rather than outsourcing it globally.

He even green-lit an entire fund, "American Dynamism," to back defense, manufacturing and hard-tech founders at a time when other funds were almost exclusively focused on software.

But Andreessen now sees his role as doing more than building the future. He is also advocating for the values that make this country successful.

Builders, he argued, have an obligation to make the case for what they build. "We want to change the world. OK, well, the world gets a vote. If you don't explain yourself, other people are going to explain you for you — and you are not going to like their explanations."

Here are the bets Andreessen is making on America's future.



HEALTH

Healthcare will benefit from AI's ability to sift through vast quantities of data about medical conditions, new diseases and the impacts of medications — and Andreessen is bullish on systems that will more readily make that data available to doctors. A16z is backing companies like Abridge, which quickly transcribes patient visits, and Hippocratic AI, which helps doctors make diagnoses. "No human doctor could possibly read all the medical literature — and an elderly patient juggling 10 medications needs exactly the drug-interaction math AI does best," Andreessen said.

MANUFACTURING

"There is not a single thing manufactured anywhere in the world that we could not manufacture in the US," Andreessen said. "The stuff that moved [overseas] was the stuff that was easy to move. The stuff that stayed was the complicated stuff." Ultimately, manufacturing fled because policy made building here "extremely difficult, expensive and in many cases illegal … It's a political problem, not a knowledge problem." A16z is backing companies like Hadrian, which builds automated machine shops to churn out aerospace and defense parts, and Apex, which mass-produces satellites on an assembly line.

TRANSPORTATION

Self-driving cars are becoming increasingly ubiquitous, and Andreessen is betting that autonomy will improve and spread to transform everything from cars to rockets to boats. When it comes to cars, the future is already here. "Self-driving cars work now," Andreessen said. In the next 10 years, he predicts "a renaissance moment for almost every kind of vehicle" — with autonomy becoming ubiquitous for boats, aircraft, submarines and rockets. A16z is investing in both the software and hardware driving autonomy forward, including Waymo and Infinite Machines.

ROBOTS

Andreessen believes robots will be transformative for regular people — able to help around the house and perform repetitive physical tasks in factories that free up humans for higher-value work. And he is very excited about the transformative impact of exoskeletons that can provide the physical ability for someone who is quadriplegic or paraplegic, has lost limbs or battles neurodegenerative disease to get out of a wheelchair and physically walk around. "I think it's going to be incredible to see," he said. A16z has bet on Mind Robotics, which is building and programming humanoid robots.

DEFENSE TECH

Defense technology has become incredibly lucrative, but Andreessen sees it both as a savvy investment and a patriotic responsibility to protect service members domestically and abroad. "We have the opportunity to use technology to save the lives of our service people," he said. In the Iraq War, special forces "literally had to go kick doors down" and search houses by hand — putting themselves at risk. But thanks to innovation now, "that's completely a thing a drone can do, 100%." A16z was an early investors in companies like Anduril, Shield AI and Saronic, which are creating autonomous military systems.

EDUCATION

Andreessen sees AI tutors and chatbots, which are endlessly patient and always available, as augmenting rather than replacing human teachers —with the idea of making personalized, on-demand learning broadly accessible. "I can't call a teacher at 2 in the morning. They get actually quite upset if you do that," Andreessen said. "But I can talk to the bot." At places like Alpha School, a chain of private schools across the country, AI handles two hours of academics a day while human teachers help with the rest. A16z recently bet on Prisms, whose virtual reality platform brings math and science to life.

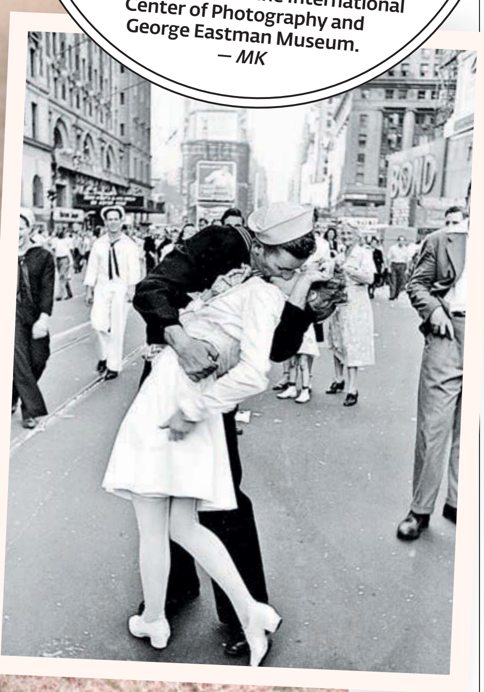
PHOTOS BY SARONIC; INFINITE MACHINE; EMMY PARK FOR NY POST, ALPHA SCHOOL.

On April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson suited up for the Brooklyn Dodgers and became the first black man to play in a modern Major League Baseball game. Robinson "never wanted to be known as a hero," according to a teammate, but he proved sports could change the United States of America for the better.

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES (2).

AMERICAN ICONS

World War II ended Aug. 14, 1945, and Life magazine dispatched photographer Albert Eisenstaedt to Times Square to capture images of the revelers. "I saw something white being grabbed," he said. "I clicked the moment the sailor kissed the nurse … It was done within a few seconds." Although the identities of the subjects was a mystery for years, experts believe they are Navy quartermaster George Mendonsa and Queens dental assistant Greta Zimmer Friedman. "VJ Day in Times Square" made Life's cover and can be seen at the International Center of Photography and George Eastman Museum.
— *MK*



Game-changer

Sports bring us transformation, unity … and even miracles

MIKE VACCARO

It is a question both essential and eternal in the pursuit of understanding the pull. Sports has that. Sports envelops us, has held on to us for as long as there have been scoreboards and grandstand seats and fans who keep their eyes lasered on the former and swarm the latter.

The question:

Why?

Why do we care the way we care?

Why do we invest so much of our souls in the outcomes of games contested by strangers?

We are consumed by movies and prestige television shows. Everyone likes a good night at the theater. We are obsessed with music. One weekend in 1969, 400,000 Americans gathered in upstate New York to listen to a cadre of rock 'n' roll bands; 16 years later, they held separate yet simultaneous festivals in Philadelphia and London for even more bands, all in the name of the hopeful cause of feeding the hungry.

But sports is something else altogether. Sports is losing yourself in nine innings, or 15 rounds, or four quarters, or three periods, or 10 furlongs. Sports is losing sleep when those games go badly for us, or for exulting and experiencing unparalleled euphoria when they go well. We get more of the bad than the good, every sports fan knows that, but we keep shaking that off. Keep coming back.

Why?

"A champion," the great prizefighter Jack Dempsey once said, "is someone who gets up when he can't."

We are drawn to that, yes. We are drawn to life's winners, always. But sports in America has also forever been the forum in which higher goals are met and broader accomplishments are pursued. Sports always seems to be the barometer forecasting change and the cudgel forcing it — often a few steps, or a few decades, before the rest of society.

In 1936, that was embodied by Jesse Owens, a 22-year-old black man born in the American South and educated in the country's heartland, at Ohio State. And in a time when he couldn't have shared a drinking fountain in his own hometown of Oakville, Ala., Owens united the entirety of a nation over the course of seven days during the Berlin Olympics, outsprinting and outjumping the world right under the watchful, rueful eye of Adolph Hitler.

Owens, Barack Obama would say 80 years later, "put a lie to notions of racial superiority — whooped 'em and taught them a thing or two about democracy and taught them a thing or two about the American character."

Joe Louis would soon do likewise in the squared circle of the boxing ring, another son of Alabama who found opportunity in a different city — Detroit — and thanks to sports. Two months before Owens burned the Nazis, Louis lost a shocking bout to German Max Schmeling, but immediately consumed himself in getting revenge for himself and the US.

So it was that on June 22, 1938, in a rematch that this time featured Louis as the reigning heavyweight champion, he pummeled Schmeling from the start at Yankee Stadium. The fight lasted 2 minutes and 4 seconds and whipped the crowd of 70,043 into a frenzied froth. Louis did all of this with very little celebration, too dignified to exult, too proud gloat.

"He is a credit to his race," Jimmy Cannon, one of history's greatest sports columnists, would write in the pages of The Post. "The human race."

Still, for all the advances Owens and Louis had made, all the moments when they'd inspired even hardcore racists to cheer on their behalf, they were merely the forerunners to Jackie Robinson. Major League Baseball had been lily-white for 62 years thanks to the "Gentleman's Agreement" among its rulers. But on April 15, 1947, Jackie Robinson went 0-for-3 with a sacrifice and a run scored in the Brooklyn Dodgers' 5-3 win over the Boston Braves.

It was the first time a black man had played a major-league game since Moses Fleetwood Walker played 42 games for the Toledo Blue Stockings of the American Association in 1884.

"Jackie never wanted to be known as a hero," his teammate on those '47 Dodgers, Ralph Branca, once said. "But he was my hero. He was a hero to all of us kids who used to play ball in neighborhoods and never saw race or religion in the kids we played sports with, just ability. Jackie brought that to the Dodgers. Jackie brought that to baseball. Jackie brought that to America."

Slowly, those three men had proven, beyond rebuttal, that sports really was a place where anything could happen, even the deliberate progress of integration and acceptance. Some would call that miraculous and, societally, it was.

But we'd always seen hints of sports' thaumaturgic wonder before, dating to Aug. 13, 1919, when, while running in the Sanford Memorial at Saratoga, the great thoroughbred Man O' War lost by a neck — the only one of 21 races he wouldn't win and to a horse named Upset (of course).

Fifty years later, the 1969 Mets would prove that all things really are possible on a field of friendly strife, winning 100 games (having never won more than 73 in their history) then blitzing through the Braves and Orioles for the most unlikely World Series championship ever.

How unlikely?

"The last miracle I did," God (portrayed by George Burns) said in 1977, "was the '69 Mets."

That was mere prelude. In 1980 — with the country searching for its confidence and stuck, in President Jimmy Carter's words, in a malaise — 20 college hockey players, kids mostly from Boston and Minnesota, had the audacity to believe they could beat the vaunted Soviet Red Army team at the Olympics in Lake Placid.

And then did.

"Do you believe in miracles?" Al Michaels asked his stunned audience on ABC-TV.

After that — after watching American sports as closely as we do, for as long as we have, with as much passion as we can — how could we not?

GREAT AMERICAN PRODUCTS

HARLEY-DAVIDSON: At the dawn of the 20th century, motorcycles became a burgeoning fixation in America – and Harley-Davidson was one of the leaders of this new industry. Over time, that name became synonymous with the vehicle itself. While other classic American companies such as Indian Motorcycle kept a tighter frame, riding a Harley meant leaning into its relaxed, larger-than-life persona. The company became an enduring symbol of American freedom, rebellion and individuality after the 1969 film "Easy Rider," in which Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper ride around America on (heavily customized) 1949 and 1952 Harley-Davidson panhead choppers. –*JS*

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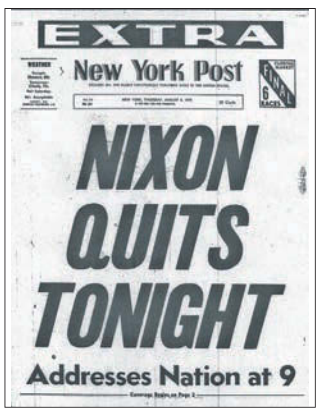
250 YEARS OF POST COVERS



EXTRA

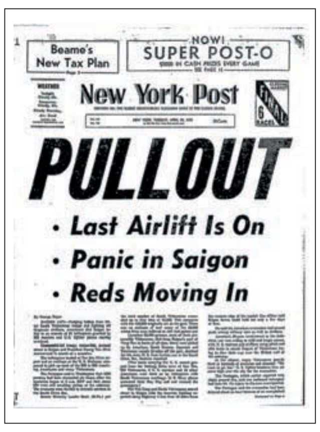
New York Post

NIXON QUITS TONIGHT

Addresses Nation at 9

AUG. 8, 1974: NIXON QUITS

In the wake of the Watergate scandal, President Richard Nixon told Vice President Gerald Ford that he would resign and formally tell Americans in a televised address at 9 p.m. that night. "Nixon, 61, will thus become the first President in American history to be forced from office, while Ford, also 61, becomes the first Chief Executive never to have faced a national election," The Post reported. Tricky Dicky's "fall from power came with astonishing speed after a two-year fight to clear himself." Nixon's stepping down was confirmed by House Republican Leader John J. Rhodes, with the Arizona congressman telling reporters he felt "relief … sorrow … gratitude, but also optimism."— *AZ*



Beame's New Tax Plan

NOW! SUPER POST-O

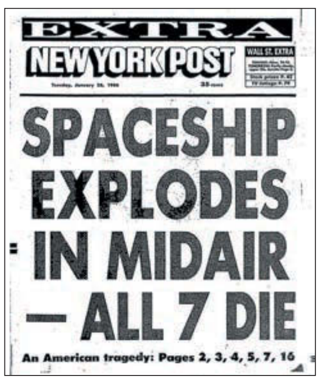
New York Post

PULLOUT

- Last Airlift Is On
- Panic in Saigon
- Reds Moving In

APRIL 29, 1975:
GETTING OUT OF VIETNAM

"PULLOUT" declared the cover as American troops scrambled to escape Saigon "in an armada of 81 helicopters guarded by 800 marines and US fighter planes roaring overhead." The withdrawal had started at the end of March, but the fighting continued into April while the US worked to get its remaining forces, embassy workers and other citizens out. The mass exodus triggered widespread panic among Vietnamese civilians and soldiers. Some attempted to climb over the 10-foot tall walls of the US embassy, only to have their fingers smashed by Marines wielding rifle butts. Others desperately tried to hand their children over. The report read, "America's 30-year involvement in the Indo-china war was ending in wild and tragic scenes." — *Anna Young*



EXTRA

NEW YORK POST

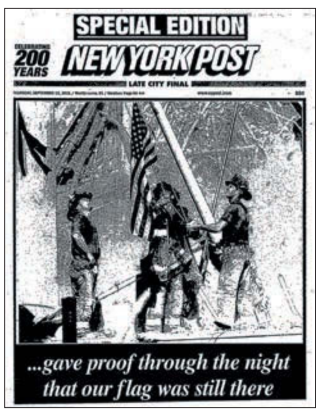
WALL ST. EXTRA

SPACESHIP EXPLODES IN MIDAIR — ALL 7 DIE

An American tragedy: Pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 16

JAN. 28, 1986:
THE CHALLENGER EXPLODES

Seventy-five seconds after lifting off from Cape Canaveral, Fla., the space shuttle Challenger "exploded into a giant fireball," The Post reported. All seven crew members, among them a school teacher named Christa McAuliffe, were killed. Pieces of the 100-ton spacecraft fell 10 miles into the Atlantic, "trailing flame and smoke." The tragedy was the first deadly "in-the-air disaster" for an American space mission, though three astronauts died on the ground in 1967 when a fire broke out in Apollo 1's cabin during a launch test. The paper's coverage of the Challenger disaster included the haunting transcript. "Roger, go at throttle up," pilot Mike Smith said in his final transmission. It was followed by "a long silence." — *Lauren Sarner*



SPECIAL EDITION

200 YEARS

NEW YORK POST

LATE CITY FINAL

...gave proof through the night that our flag was still there

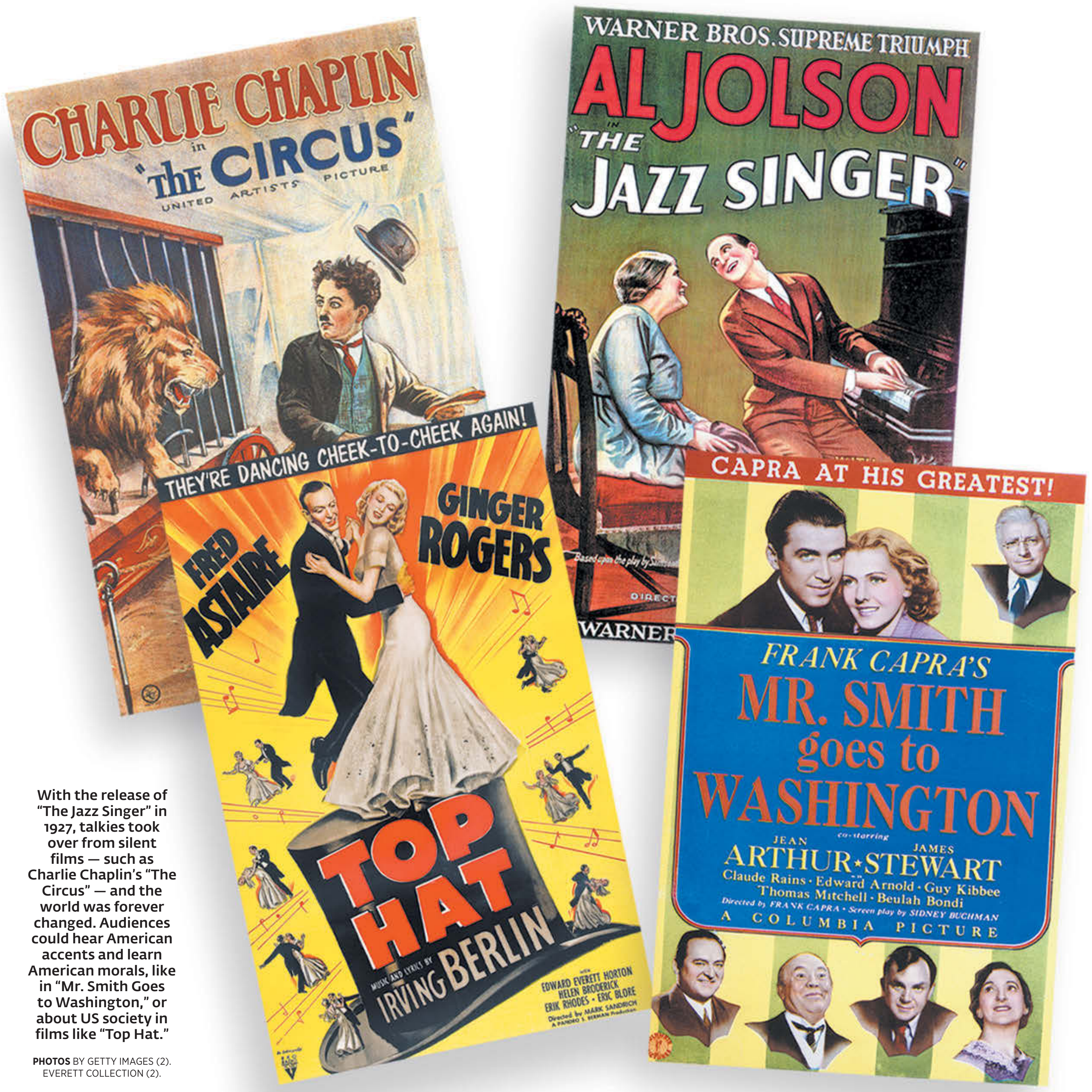
SEPT. 13, 2001:
RAISING THE FLAG AFTER 9/11

"...gave proof through the night that our flag was still there," The Post's poignant cover read two days after 9/11. The words ran underneath Thomas E. Franklin's photo of three firefighters — George Johnson, Daniel McWilliams and William "Billy" Eisengrein — raising an American flag at Ground Zero. "Rescuers plucked a handful of miracle survivors from the fiery World Trade Center wreckage yesterday as a multitentacled investigation into the terrorist slaughter swung into high gear," the paper reported. Dozens of pages put names and faces on the dead, missing, injured and those tasked with the herculean rescue-and-recovery efforts. "This is the equivalent to the devastation at Pearl Harbor," Ladder 25 firefighter Jake Szymanski told The Post. "How do you begin to rebuild?" — *AZ*

TURN TO PAGE 28

Screen test

Movies have shown us — and the world — the American story


CHARLIE CHAPLIN
in
"THE CIRCUS"
UNITED ARTISTS PICTURE
WARNER BROS. SUPREME TRIUMPH
AL JOLSON
"THE JAZZ SINGER"
WARNER
THEY'RE DANCING CHEEK-TO-CHEEK AGAIN!
FRED ASTAIRE
GINGER ROGERS
TOP HAT
MUSIC AND LYRICS BY IRVING BERLIN
EDWARD EVERETT HORTON
HELEN BRODERICK
ERIK RHODES · ERIC BLORE
Directed by MARK SANDRICH
A PANDRO S. BERMAN Production
CAPRA AT HIS GREATEST!
FRANK CAPRA'S
MR. SMITH goes to WASHINGTON
co-starring
JEAN ARTHUR · JAMES STEWART
Claude Rains · Edward Arnold · Guy Kibbee
Thomas Mitchell · Beulah Bondi
Directed by FRANK CAPRA · Screen play by SIDNEY BUCHMAN
A COLUMBIA PICTURE

With the release of "The Jazz Singer" in 1927, talkies took over from silent films — such as Charlie Chaplin's "The Circus" — and the world was forever changed. Audiences could hear American accents and learn American morals, like in "Mr. Smith Goes to Washington," or about US society in films like "Top Hat."

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES (2). EVERETT COLLECTION (2).

FOR much of the 20th century, America's greatest export wasn't a product or a military alliance. It was a collection of stories.

Through movies, television and music, American culture reached people who would never visit the United States, yet still felt they knew it. Hollywood was often at the center of that exchange. Film's first great advantage was that it didn't need words to tell a story, but everything changed once Hollywood found its sound.

Silent movies were among the first truly global art forms because they required so little translation. You could watch Charlie Chaplin almost anywhere and understand the story. Grief looks the same in Tokyo as it does in Buenos Aires, and so does a pratfall.

Then, sound arrived. With the release of "The Jazz Singer" in 1927 and each of the "talkies" that followed, audiences around the world were no longer just watching Hollywood stories; they were hearing a distinctly American voice.

That changed the appeal of Hollywood, and of entertainment as an American export. Audiences around the world were no longer just watching Hollywood stories; they were hearing a distinctly American voice. The characters sounded different, spoke freely, challenged authority casually and carried themselves with a confidence that felt modern. America had long occupied a special place in the world's imagination as a country where people could reinvent themselves. Sound gave that idea a voice.

RON HOWARD & BRIAN GRAZER

America's entertainment industry also benefited from something few other national cinemas could claim: It was built by people who came from somewhere else. Hollywood reflected the sensibilities of a country shaped by immigrants and their descendants, drawing from different traditions, perspectives and experiences while blending them into something distinctly American.

That gave its stories a rare quality. They felt unique yet familiar. Audiences around the world could often see some part of themselves in them because, in many ways, those stories had already been shaped by people whose roots stretched far beyond America's borders.

Whether in movies, television or music, American popular culture has long succeeded not simply because it projected America outward, but because it absorbed influences from everywhere and translated them into stories that resonated almost everywhere.

We've spent our careers, separately and together, trying to understand why some stories travel and others don't. We've seen audiences respond to the same emotional truths in cities and countries that otherwise have very little in common. The answer is rarely spectacle alone. At its best, Hollywood is exceptionally good at building emotional investment, finding ways to make audiences care deeply about outcomes that, on paper, have little to do with their own lives.

The emotions at the center of these stories are universal. Courage, sacrifice, ambition, romance, family, hope — none belong to America. What Hollywood mastered is a particular way of organizing stories around those emotions and then distributing them on a global scale.

You can see that influence in surprisingly practical ways. Ron still meets people who say they learned English by watching "Happy Days." British and Australian actors often arrive on American productions fluent in American accents because they grew up on American television. For decades, American television brought everyday versions of the country into living rooms around the world, making America feel familiar even to people who had never set foot here.

Those stories point to something larger than popularity. For generations, American entertainment helped shape how people around the world imagined success, freedom, opportunity and reinvention. Even when viewers had no intention of moving here, they became familiar with the American Dream: the belief that where you start does not necessarily determine where you end up.

American movies have returned again and again to the underdog, the outsider, the skeptic, the person who challenges authority and decides the story isn't over yet. Whether the setting is a Senate chamber, a newsroom, a boxing ring or a rap battle, the appeal comes from the same faith that power can be confronted, corruption can be exposed, and even damaged institutions can be forced to answer to the truth.

"Mr. Smith Goes to Washington" and "All the President's Men" are both deeply critical of power, yet among the most optimistic American films ever made. Both suggest that individuals can confront powerful institutions and still make a difference. They are skeptical without becoming cynical.

We know life does not always work that way, but these stories help to remind us that it could.

For a long time, Hollywood was less inclined to examine the gap between that promise and reality. Many of the people who built the industry were immigrants, or the children of immigrants, who had real reasons to romanticize America. They saw elegance in Fred Astaire, freedom in reinvention and commercial wisdom in happy endings.

After World War II, American filmmakers became more willing to confront uncertainty, disappointment and the gap between the country's ideals and realities.

By the 1970s, American films had grown rougher and more skeptical. Yet even as the stories became darker, they rarely abandoned the idea that individual choices still mattered.

Ron felt that tension directly while we were making "Cinderella Man." James J. Braddock, the real-life heavyweight boxer played by Russell Crowe, wasn't simply a symbol of perseverance. He was a husband and father trying to feed his children during the Depression, which made his comeback feel less like sports mythology than a story about the cost of believing in the American Dream when the cupboard is bare.

In the last 30 years, the most important new American storytelling language has been hip-hop, even if some people were slow to recognize it. Like Hollywood decades earlier, hip-hop became a distinctly American art form that spread globally without losing its local roots. When Brian was producing "Boomerang" in the early 1990s, he encountered the Wu-Tang Clan's Ol' Dirty Bastard and the world surrounding him, and came away convinced he was hearing something larger than a trend. A prominent newspaper editor later told him hip-hop would pass. Brian heard something else, a language already defining how younger America spoke, moved, argued and imagined itself.

It took another decade, and a movie called "8 Mile," to make that argument on screen in a way that traveled everywhere. That film feels to both of us like one of the defining American movies. The story is deeply rooted in Detroit, yet audiences around the world understood its emotional core. Its appeal had little to do with geography. It came from a familiar human desire: to be seen, to be heard and to prove that your voice matters.

For much of the 20th century, American entertainment primarily exported stories. Streaming has created a far more reciprocal exchange. Streaming has trained American audiences to accept, and even seek out, stories told in other languages.

Ron saw evidence of that shift while directing "Thirteen Lives." The film opens with an extended sequence in Thai. Earlier generations of executives might have worried that subtitles would alienate American audiences. Increasingly, audiences view them as a sign of authenticity rather than an obstacle. The film tested better than almost anything we've made, including "Apollo 13" and "A Beautiful Mind."

The success of shows such as "Squid Game" reflects a broader change. American storytelling continues to influence the rest of the world, but it is also being influenced in return. That exchange has made audiences more adventurous and storytellers more ambitious.

That exchange may be the future of whatever cultural influence America retains, if we're fortunate enough to keep it. America isn't culturally magnetic because it's simple or coherent or even particularly admirable at any given moment. It's magnetic because it's genuinely complicated. It has grit and glamour sharing the same room, optimism and cynicism arguing across the same table, rebellion and commerce in permanent uneasy negotiation.

We do not think people respond to American culture because they want to become American. What people continue to respond to are stories built around a certain kind of possibility: that talent can emerge from unexpected places, that circumstances can change and that individuals can still shape their own futures.

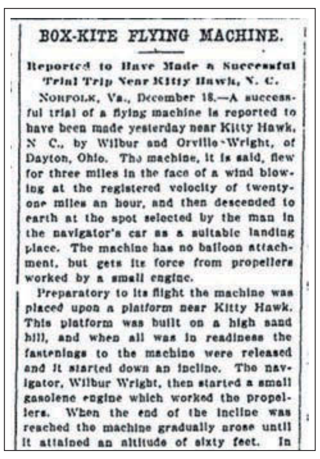
Audiences are more aware of contradictions than they once were. They are less interested in comforting myths and more interested in honest ones.

Yet the appeal of reinvention remains remarkably durable. For more than a century, it has been one of America's most successful narrative exports. Whether the country always lives up to that promise is another question.

At its best, the American story has never been about certainty. It's been about the belief that anyone can find a voice and that once they do, the world might listen.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

250 YEARS OF POST COVERS



BOX-KITE FLYING MACHINE.

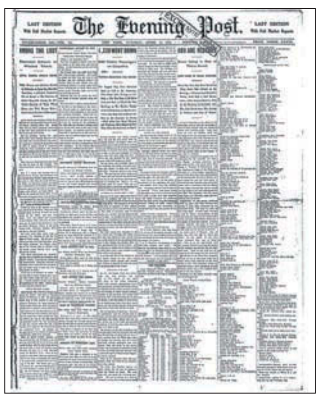
Reported to Have Made a Successful Trial Trip Near Kitty Hawk, N. C.

NORFOLK, Va., December 18.—A successful trial of a flying machine is reported to have been made yesterday near Kitty Hawk, N. C., by Wilbur and Orville Wright, of Dayton, Ohio. The machine, it is said, flew for three miles in the face of a wind blowing at the registered velocity of twenty-one miles an hour, and then descended to earth at the spot selected by the man in the navigator's car as a suitable landing place. The machine has no balloon attachment, but gets its force from propellers worked by a small engine.

Preparatory to its flight the machine was placed upon a platform near Kitty Hawk. This platform was built on a high sand hill, and when all was in readiness the fastenings to the machine were released and it started down an incline. The navigator, Wilbur Wright, then started a small gasolene engine which worked the propellers. When the end of the incline was reached the machine gradually arose until it attained an altitude of sixty feet. In

DEC. 18, 1903:
WRIGHT BROTHERS TAKE FLIGHT

Beneath the headline "Box-Kite Flying Machine," The Evening Post reported that Ohio brothers Wilbur and Orville Wright had a "successful trial" with their engine-powered aircraft. The rudimentary, first-of-its-kind plane had taken off near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, and the article went on to note that "it is said" that it "flew for three miles in the face of a wind blowing at the registered velocity of 21 miles per hour." However, the initial accounts of the first flight — reported by a Virginia newspaper and distributed by the Associated Press — were greatly exaggerated. In actuality, the machine, described as a "huge framework of light timbers, 33-feet wide," flew 852 feet and reached an altitude of no more than 30 feet. The whole endeavor lasted just 59 seconds. — *BH*



The Evening Post

APRIL 16, 1912: **TITANIC SINKS**

Two days after the Titanic hit an iceberg in the North Atlantic the front page announced the maritime tragedy's grim toll: 1,320 passengers were reported lost and 800 saved when "the biggest vessel ever" went down on its maiden voyage. The survivors were primarily women and children who filled 20 lifeboats and were eventually taken aboard the RMS Carpathia. Most of the men traveling on the ship — including American business magnate John Jacob Astor IV, one of the world's wealthiest people at the time — "met their fate," The Post reported. "The law of the chivalry of the sea had prevailed .... A woman was a woman, a child a child, and a man a man, whether in the first cabin or the steerage." — *Ben Cost*

The Evening Post

GERMAN RAIDERS REPORTED OFF COAST;
CRUISER CORMORANT BLOWN UP AT GUAM

WARNINGS OF DANGER FROM CAPES AND NEWPORT

APRIL 7, 1917: **AMERICA ENTERS WWI**

"German Raiders Reported Off Coast; Cruiser Cormorant Blown Up at Guam," the cover headline read the day after the US entered the Great War. The entire front page was devoted to stories about the conflict, including one reporting that a German crew in the Pacific had scuttled its ship after refusing to surrender to the US. A special dispatch from Washington noted that "America's first day as a belligerent was unattended by any outward change," though elsewhere it was reported that stocks were already in a slump and a wheat shortage loomed. "England and America have one common aim," another dispatch read. "There is no desire to secure territories, but only to guarantee a lasting peace with ample security for small nations, and the full preservation of liberties." — *AZ*

Closing Market Prices, With Complete Bid and Asked, in This Edition

New York Evening Post

LA GUARDIA HITS TIGER BANK BOOKS

MARKET CRASHES WILDLY
WITH LOSSES UP TO 47;
MORGAN BANK POOL MEETS

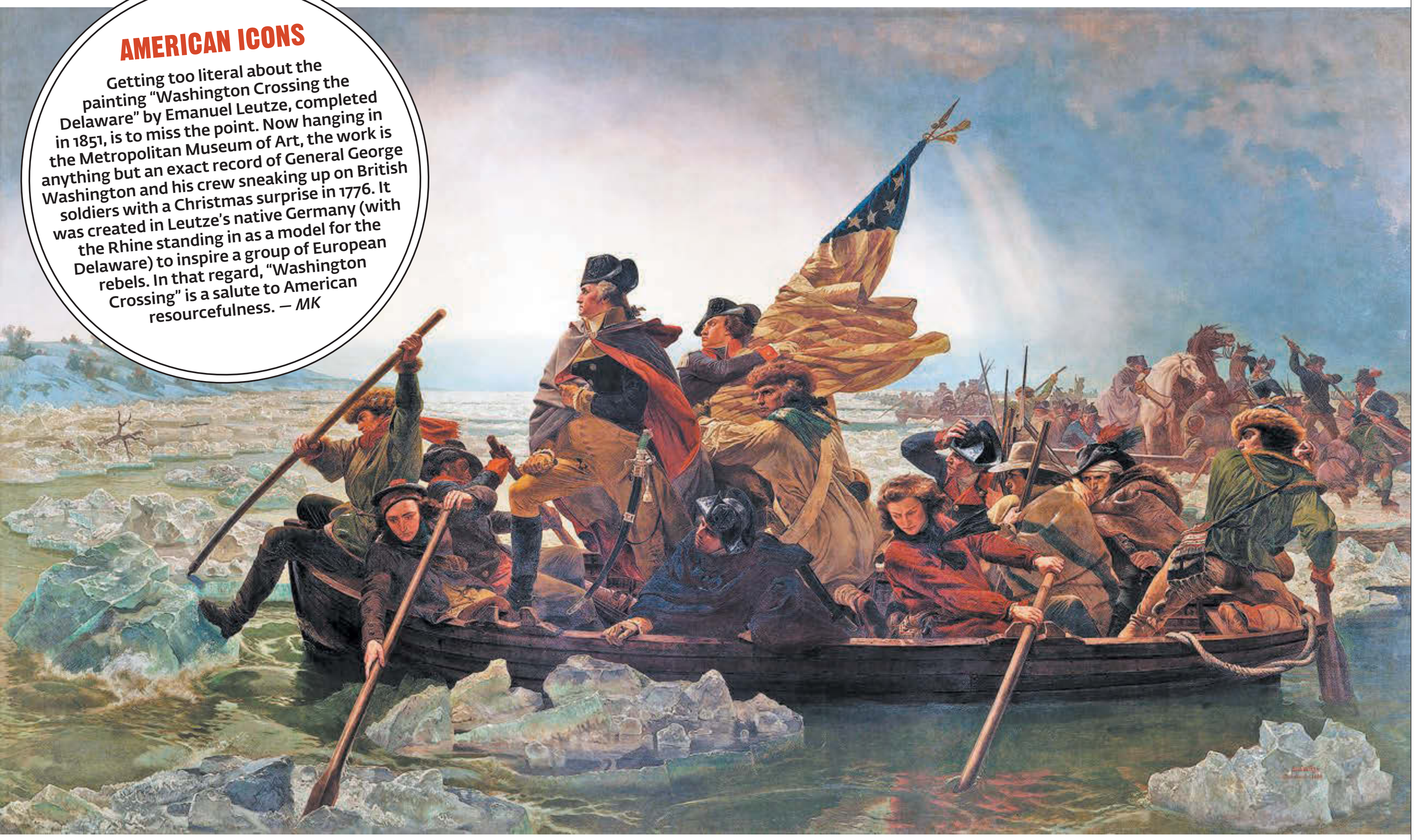
OCT. 28, 1929: **STOCK MARKET CRASH**

"A drastic decline in stocks, even more serious than occurred last Thursday, caused the greatest anxiety in Wall Street today," The Post's Frank J. Williams reported as 9.2 million shares were traded in a single day of panic. "Prices of the country's leading industrial, railroad and public utility securities melted away under public liquidation only slightly less heavy than the record-breaking day last week." American Telephone and Telegraph dropped 34 points, General Electric plummeted 47½ points and US Steel fell 17¾ points. The devastating losses followed Black Monday's 38.33-point plunge the day before. The combined two-day drop wiped out $14 billion in stock value, marking the beginning of the Great Depression. — *AZ*

TURN TO PAGE 16

Legacy of the 'liberty people'

America has been fighting for an ideal of freedom since 1776



AMERICAN ICONS

Getting too literal about the painting "Washington Crossing the Delaware" by Emanuel Leutze, completed in 1851, is to miss the point. Now hanging in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the work is anything but an exact record of General George Washington and his crew sneaking up on British soldiers with a Christmas surprise in 1776. It was created in Leutze's native Germany (with the Rhine standing in as a model for the Delaware) to inspire a group of European rebels. In that regard, "Washington Crossing" is a salute to American resourcefulness. *— MK*

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES (2).

TWO hundred fifty years is a long time, and 1776 can feel very far from us.

It was a world of kings and gilded hierarchy, of slavery and deference, of wives promising obedience, of empires and colonies. Elite men sported powdered wigs and short breeches under long floral waistcoats. Their daughters sucked in their breath to squeeze into stays, corsets and petticoats.

The most reliable sources of information were four-page newspapers and letters written with quills dipped in ink pots, both of which took at least two months to cross the Atlantic. The fiercest weapons were cannons and muskets. Heck, they didn't even have electricity or flushing toilets.

Yet for all the differences, the founding generation of America still speaks to us. A few of those men in wigs crafted an extraordinary document, the Declaration of Independence, in 1776, in which they announced to the world their decision to become a new nation.

SARAH M.S. PEARSALL

The United States commemorates the publication of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 as the founding event. For 250 years, people all over the world have looked to it as an inspiration and a guide. Yet what is of such world historical importance is not just the ink-stained Declaration itself, but the positive principles that informed it.

These values were not restricted to Founding Fathers in 13 British colonies (and by the way, there were actually 26 British American colonies in 1775).

Those ideals — such as life, happiness and equality — emerged out of a world shot through with what people saw as oppression, what one New England minister called "enslaved Empires."

Americans were willing to take extraordinary risks and even to make the ultimate sacrifice of their "Lives … Fortunes, and … sacred Honor" in order to support these values. Ordinary soldiers marched with their muskets into hellish landscapes, sometimes with bodies so thick on the ground that it was almost impossible to walk.

One word on a powder horn carried into battle starts to reveal why: liberty. In 1775, this word started showing up on American-made containers for gunpowder, including one now housed in a Washington, DC, museum. As it happens, the soldier, Prince Simbo, who had this horn in his possession at Valley Forge in 1778, was black, possibly enslaved himself and almost certainly related to enslaved people. In Connecticut in 1777, when Simbo took possession of this powder horn, slavery was legal, as it was throughout the colonies, north and south.

Liberty, then, had multiple meanings for Simbo, as for many. To be sure, it was a rallying cry against British oppression; other soldiers held horns scratched with "liberty or death!" It fired Simbo up to fight for the common cause, one for which he was later injured. Yet it was also an aspiration for a man who saw too many around him enduring slavery.

Simbo was not alone in his commitment to liberty. Another private, Ezra Tilden, called his side "Liberty People." Among them was a soldier at Valley Forge, Colonel Joseph Louis Cook (Akiatonharónkweni), a member of the Oneida nation. He had been by the side of the famous American general Richard Montgomery, who died in December 1775, during an ill-fated American attempt to take Quebec.

Another soldier, Jeremiah Greenman, who served in that campaign and many others, kept a diary of a service which lasted for eight long years. In 1781, he recorded a Fourth of July celebration in his camp that launched with a series of toasts, the first about the new United States: "May they ever be free [and] Independent." Most of the toasts were in fact to France, Spain and Holland for their support (soldiers toasted the kings of France and Spain before they toasted General Washington). He and other men enjoyed a day off for celebration, in between marches and battles.

Women, too, worked hard to support the cause of liberty. One, Esther Reed, organized a campaign to provide support to suffering soldiers like Greenman. Even if people did not approve of women stepping out of their homes in order to raise money, Reed felt everyone at least had to "applaud our efforts for the relief of the armies which defend our lives, our possessions, our liberty." She argued that women like her were "born for liberty, disdaining to bear the irons of a tyrannic Government." A love of liberty fired her efforts — and those of so many other women and men in that long, painful war.

One soldier wrote to his wife in June 1775 that before deploying, he had made sure to draft a will "as Life is always uncertain." In fact, this officer, George Washington, survived the war. His strategies had also helped to win it. He was willing to take risks, some of which paid off handsomely (some, like the disaster at Quebec, did not). What drove him to be bold, as he informed John Hancock, was that he worried about the costs of defeat. It meant the forfeiture of his reputation and fortune, and also the loss of "the inestimable blessing of liberty."

In a world shot through with slavery and oppression, liberty and process were prized. To this day, a monument in Baltimore, where I live, depicts the 1783 moment in which Washington, the beloved commander-in-chief, handed in his resignation after the war ended. He could have lingered in this position of authority, but he felt it was right to move on. When pressed, years later, to return to public life, he did so only with reluctance — becoming the first US president under a new Constitution that mandated four-year terms for the job: an extraordinary innovation in a world still full of kings and tyrants.

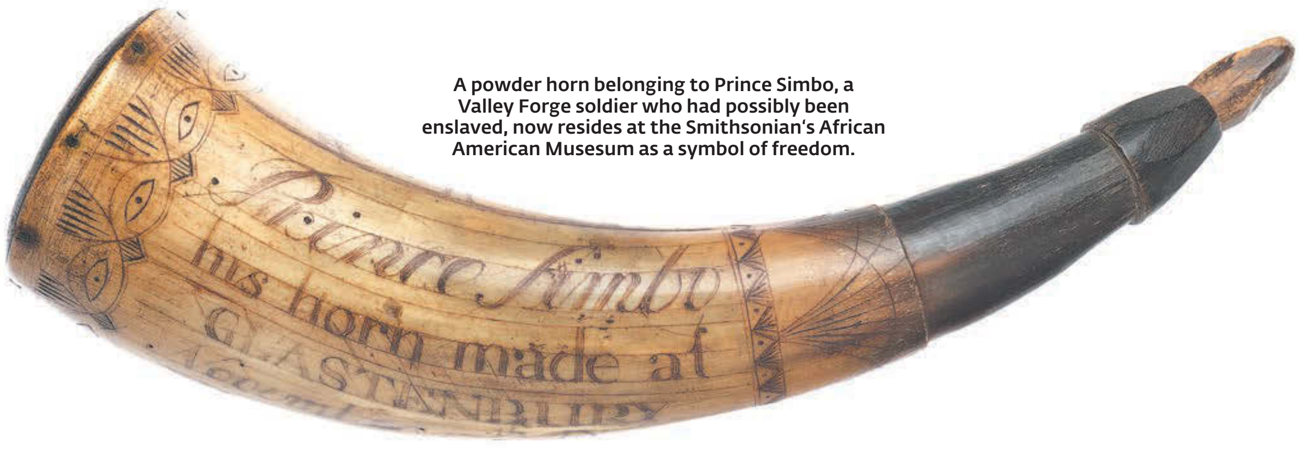
Washington himself set the precedent that a president should not serve more than two terms. He knew the vital importance of stepping away from power; this mechanism was the only way the valiant new republic could flourish. And he understood better than most that ideals such as liberty were more important than a single man, however important and impressive that man was.

In their wigs and breeches, Founding Fathers like Washington had a "decent respect to the opinions of mankind." They wanted this new nation to be a beacon of liberty to the world. They did not achieve that goal in their lifetimes, as the US continued to practice slavery and to dispossess Indigenous people, including the relatives of valiant soldiers like Simbo and Cook.

Yet that aspiration has motivated Americans ever since, and it is worth taking the day off on July 4 to celebrate it.

However distant the American Revolution may seem, we still relish the idea of being a "Liberty People." Despite so many differences, what connects us with that founding generation of the United States is a shared desire to live up to these stirring ideals — what Abraham Lincoln called "the better angels of our nature."

Sarah M.S. Pearsall is the author of "Freedom Round the Globe: A World History of the American Revolution" (Doubleday).



A powder horn belonging to Prince Simbo, a Valley Forge soldier who had possibly been enslaved, now resides at the Smithsonian's African American Museum as a symbol of freedom.

GREAT AMERICAN PRODUCTS

SNEAKER CULTURE & STREETWEAR: Humans have always turned craft into art. So when Nike teamed up with NBA star Michael Jordan in 1985, sneakers moved out of gym lockers and into display cases, signaling one's devotion. Streetwear bubbled up from innovations on basketball courts in Chicago, skateboarders in Venice Beach and hip-hop fans in The Bronx. Limited releases saw people waiting overnight to buy assets they could resell for thousands. At first, the traditional top-down fashion world scoffed, but eventually this new trend revolutionized global consumerism, elevating everyday athletic wear into a luxury status symbol.

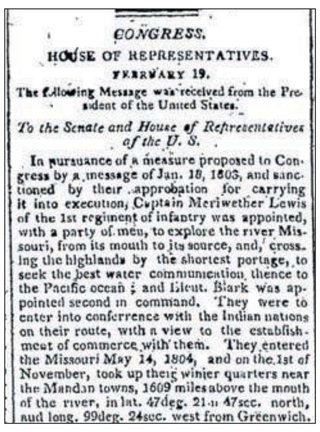
— Joel Stein, author of "America: The Imagination of a Nation" (Assouline)

250 YEARS OF POST COVERS

NEW-YORK EVENING POST.

NOV. 16, 1801: NEW YORK POST DEBUTS

Alexander Hamilton launched a paper with a Federalist bent to serve as a counterpart to his nemesis — then-President Thomas Jefferson — and the ruling Democratic-Republican party. Sent to some 600 subscribers, the first issue was just four pages long and included political commentary and numerous ads, many for ships available for sale, freight or charter. "The design of this paper is to diffuse among the people correct information on all interesting subjects, to inculcate just principles in religion, morals, and politics; and to cultivate a taste for sound literature," editor William Coleman wrote in a prospectus on the front page. *— Nikki Mascali Roarty*



CONGRESS.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

FEBRUARY 19.

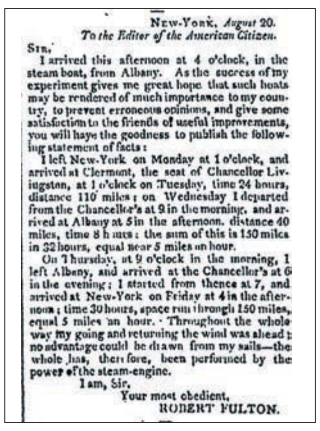
The following Message was received from the President of the United States.

To the Senate and House of Repreſentatives of the U. S.

In pursuance of a measure proposed to Congress by a message of Jan. 18, 1803, and sanctioned by their approbation for carrying it into execution, Captain Meriwether Lewis of the 1st regiment of infantry was appointed, with a party of men, to explore the river Missouri, from its mouth to its source, and, crossing the highlands by the shortest portage, to seek the best water communication thence to the Pacific ocean; and Lieut. Clark was appointed second in command. They were to enter into conferrence with the Indian nations on their route, with a view to the establishment of commerce with them. They entered the Missouri May 14, 1804, and on the 1st of November, took up their winter quarters near the Mandan towns, 1609 miles above the mouth of the river, in lat. 47deg. 21m 47sec. north, and long. 99deg. 24sec. west from Greenwich.

FEB. 24, 1806:
LEWIS AND CLARK EXPEDITION

Page 2 of the paper included a progress report from President Thomas Jefferson to Congress on the Lewis and Clark expedition. In 1803, as the Louisiana Purchase was being finalized — effectively doubling the size of the fledgling USA — he'd appointed his personal secretary, Meriwether Lewis, to lead an exploration of the new lands and engage in diplomacy with Indian tribes. In the printed missive, Jefferson noted that Lewis and his second-in-command, Army Lt. William Clark, had officially been surveying the land since May of 1804, when they set off from St. Louis. By the time they completed the expedition in September of 1806, they would have traveled more than 8,000 miles, to the Pacific coast of what is now Oregon, and back. *— Billy Heller*



NEW-YORK, *August 20.*

To the Editor of the American Citizen.

SIR,

I arrived this afternoon at 4 o'clock, in the steam boat, from Albany. As the success of my experiment gives me great hope that such boats may be rendered of much importance to my country, to prevent erroneous opinions, and give some satisfaction to the friends of useful improvements, you will have the goodness to publish the following statement of facts:

I left New-York on Monday at 1 o'clock, and arrived at Clermont, the seat of Chancellor Livingston, at 1 o'clock on Tuesday, time 24 hours, distance 110 miles; on Wednesday I departed from the Chancellor's at 9 in the morning, and arrived at Albany at 5 in the afternoon, distance 40 miles, time 8 hours; the sum of this is 150 miles in 32 hours, equal near 5 miles an hour.

On Thursday, at 9 o'clock in the morning, I left Albany, and arrived at the Chancellor's at 6 in the evening; I started from thence at 7, and arrived at New-York on Friday at 4 in the afternoon; time 30 hours, space run through 150 miles, equal 5 miles an hour. Throughout the whole way my going and returning the wind was ahead; no advantage could be drawn from my sails—the whole has, therefore, been performed by the power of the steam-engine.

I am, Sir,
Your most obedient,
ROBERT FULTON.

AUG. 22, 1807: FULL STEAM AHEAD

While others had previously created floating vessels powered by steam, it was Robert Fulton who invented the first commercially viable version, earning him the title "father of the steamboat." On Aug. 17, 1807, he successfully captained a steam engine-powered paddleboat 150 miles up the Hudson River — from NYC to Albany — and back. Upon his return to the city, Fulton penned a dispatch, which The Post ran, writing that the 62-hour round trip trip "gives me great hope that such boats may be rendered of much importance to my country." Fulton's North River Steamboat quickly became a major enterprise, ferrying passengers and cargo up and down the Hudson. He had first attempted using steam to power a boat in 1803, along the Seine in Paris, but the vessel sunk. *— BH*

The Evening Post.

DEC. 19, 1865:
13TH AMENDMENT RATIFIED

"SLAVERY ABOLISHED" read a cover headline the day after Secretary of State William H. Seward issued a proclamation announcing the "final ratification" of the 13th Amendment. New York was among the 27 of the country's then-36 states that voted in favor of the amendment, helping provide the needed three-fourths for ratification. Delaware, Kentucky, New Jersey and Mississippi rejected it, with the latter not officially passing it until 2013. The paper reprinted Seward's proclamation, which included an excerpt from the amendment itself. The first section read, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States or any place subject their jurisdiction." *— David Russell*

TURN TO PAGE 8

Reaching for the clouds

The skyscraper could only be born in America

America is the birthplace of the skyscraper, including the Empire State Building, which opened in 1931 and was the world's tallest building for four decades.

PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES (2).

STEVE CUOZZO

GROUND will be broken for Two World Trade Center on July 9. It's appropriate that the final tower at the site once called "Ground Zero" will be the new headquarters of the American Express Company. America, after all, is where skyscrapers were invented.

And although the iconic New York City cloudbusters built mostly between the 1930s and 1950s are no longer the world's tallest, they remain the most beautiful, the most expressive of their times — and forever symbolic of Yankee Doodle aspiration and faith.

The earliest skyscrapers popped up in Chicago in the late 1800s, but Manhattan soon overtook that city, and our collection reigns supreme.

They fire the imaginations of our friends and enemies alike. A photo of Liverpool-born George Harrison, shot in 1963 when the Beatles weren't yet a global phenomenon, captures him gazing in wonder at lower Manhattan from Liberty Island.

Even the captain of Nazi Germany's U-123 that sneaked into New York Harbor in the winter of 1942 said, after sighting the lit-up spires through a submarine periscope, "I cannot describe the feeling with words."

Height in itself isn't the only benchmark of a skyscraper. The 22-story Flatiron Building, completed in 1902, is regarded as one for its impressive height for its time, and for the way its triangular form, tapering to a point at its northern end, proclaims a relationship with the sky above and the city around it.

Our masterpieces include many from the era of masonry and brick, materials that gave structures a warmer look than modern steel and glass, and lent themselves to romantic ornamentation. They were built for companies such as US Steel, the Chrysler Corporation and RCA, and by visionaries such as John D. Rockefeller and GM mogul John J. Raskob, the prime mover behind the Empire State Building. The latter went up in a mere 18 months during the depths of the Great Depression — a stirring affirmation of American resilience.

As skyscraper historian Carol Willis wrote in her preface to Daniel M. Abramson's wonderful "Skyscraper Rivals," about the race to build Jazz Age icons 70 Pine Street and 40 Wall Street, downtown Manhattan's "skyline of stepped-back masses and slender spires established New York as the modern metropolis."

Now a luxury apartment building, 70 Pine Street and its night-lit crown exudes quiet majesty in every nook of its Art Deco brick and stone. A short block away, 40 Wall Street (today the Trump Building), is equally handsome, even if its pyramid-shaped mansard roof lost illumination decades ago.

Another downtown masterwork, the Gothic-detailed, circa 1913 Woolworth Building was called "The Cathedral of Commerce" for good reason: Its contours embody the same heaven-ward thrust as the Duomo in Milan and the Cathedral of Chartres in France.

Other US cities took pride in their machine-age skyscrapers, such as Chicago's Wrigley Building and Tribune Tower, Philadelphia's City Hall and Kansas City's Power and Light Building. But everything changed with the advent of glass curtain-wall construction on Park Avenue in the 1950s — a revolution led by Lever House and the Seagram Building.

Their design ethos yielded scores of copycat flat-topped glass boxes. But a new, austere beauty emerged at a handful of locations. The somber Financial District tower known as One Liberty, originally commissioned by US Steel, exposes the tower's actual structural steel, which narrowly survived the 9/11 attack. And architect Philip Johnson designed the postmodern 550 Madison Avenue, with its famous "Chippendale" top, as a rebuke to International Style monotony.

Today, "supertalls" have become the international vernacular to show off a nation's or a kingdom's wealth.

New York developers, including Donald Trump in the far West 60s, have in more recent years toyed with erecting the world's tallest towers, but given up when confronted with the political and engineering challenges such schemes faced. Of the world's 11 tallest buildings, only one of our own, One World Trade Center, makes the cut. Previous champs such as the Empire State Building and the former Sears Tower in Chicago appear far down the list.

The newest one to enjoy a global mystique is also the tallest: Burj Khalifa in Dubai, almost twice as high as One World Trade Center. Its soaring verticality and needle apex suggest nothing less than the shoot-for-the-heavens iconography of classic old Manhattan towers.

But, surprise! Its architect is an American, Adrian Smith, who's also credited with Nordstrom-based Central Park Tower on West 57th Street. And which other genius made Burj Khalifa and many giants possible? Another American. Pakistan-born structural engineer Fazlur Rahman Khan, the inventor of so-called "bundled tube design," became a US citizen in 1967.

And NYC skyscraper fans who miss the early 20th-century style can rejoice over the re-emergence of viewer-friendly crowns, from Citicorp tower's slanted rooftop to the wedge-topped giants in Hudson Yards. The mast atop One Bryant Park, with candy-cane night lighting, recalls earlier times. And newer One Vanderbilt wholeheartedly defers to the past with a profile that becomes more slender near the top and is punctuated by a true antenna-like pinnacle.

Our most emotionally charged skyscraper nexus, of course, is the World Trade Center. The four towers that bravely rose a few years after the carnage of 9/11 form an impressive ensemble. They're thriving with commercial life in a way the original Twin Towers never really did.

But Two World Trade Center was the missing link for more than a quarter century. Architects Foster + Partners soften its 1,226-foot high glass facade with nine highly visible outdoor terraces and corner gardens.

Academic critics might complain the Amex tower isn't creative enough, as they did of the earlier buildings. But everyone else will cheer its expression of American qualities born on July 4, 1776 — courage, faith and indomitable strength.

And let us all remember: Only a very few Americans can name a single one of Shanghai's rainbow-lit skyline towers. But it's near certain there's no one in Shanghai who doesn't recognize the Empire State Building.

GREAT AMERICAN PRODUCTS

BARBIE: Barbie was founded in 1959 by Ruth Handler, a mother and entrepreneur whose inspiration came from watching her daughter play with baby dolls and paper dolls with fashionable outfits. Ruth combined the two ideas in a grown-up three-dimensional figure. Her philosophy? That girls could play and envision themselves as anything they wanted to be, pioneering the "lifestyle brand" model. Over the past six-plus decades, Barbie has empowered generations to imagine themselves in aspirational roles, from astronaut to doctor. *— JS*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

250 YEARS OF POST COVERS

New York Post

INVASION

SMASHING INLAND ON BROAD FRONT

JUNE 6, 1944: D-DAY INVASION

"INVASION: SMASHING INLAND ON BROAD FRONT," screamed the D-Day front page, reporting on the largest seaborne invasion in history — and the battle that turned the tide of World War II. The Post reported that 4,000 ships transported more than 150,000 American, British and Canadian forces "under protection of 11,000 Allied bombers and fighters" on to the beaches of Normandy, France. "The planes wrought gigantic havoc on the elaborate coastal defense system that the Nazis had spent four years building. Naval gunfire completed the job." Still, the war would rage on for nearly a year afterward. Germany did not officially surrender until May 8, 1945. Japan followed on Sept. 2. — *Paul McPolin*

New York Post HOME NEWS BRONX

MUST! DDT and YOU! Read It Today

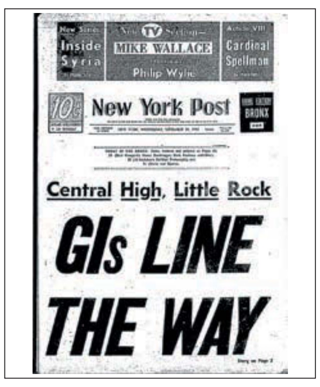
See Albert Deutsch's Revelations on Page 2

WEST PACT SIGNED BY 12 NATIONS

50 Heights Mothers to Lose Jobs, Go on City Relief If Nursery Can't Find Home

APRIL 4, 1949: NATO CREATED

"West Pact Signed by 12 Nations" heralded the front page after the US, Britain, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway and Portugal converged to establish the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It was to be "a one-for-all and all-for-one defense against any attacker — a warning clearly intended for Communist Russia," read an AP report. But "three nations holding strategic positions in the North Atlantic" were not on board. "They are the Republic of Ireland, which declined to have any part in an alliance with Britain; Spain with which the other Western states are not on good terms; and Sweden, which chose to remain 'neutral.'" NATO has grown to 32 nations, including Spain and Sweden, but not Ireland. — *Angela Barbuti*



Inside Syria | MIKE WALLACE | Cardinal Spellman

New York Post

Central High, Little Rock

GIs LINE THE WAY

SEPT. 25, 1957:
LITTLE ROCK 9 BLOCKED

The Supreme Court's historic Brown vs. Board of Education decision in 1954 set the stage for a dramatic showdown over desegregation in Arkansas. In late September 1957, nine black students were blocked by the governor-controlled state National Guard from entering all-white Little Rock Central HS. President Eisenhower answered with federal troops. The Post's Stan Opotowsky wrote from the flashpoint scene, "Nine Negro children, once turned away by National Guardsmen and once driven away by the fury of a mob, planned to enter Central HS today under the protection of tough professional soldiers." He called it "an historic milestone against racial segregation" — the first time since Reconstruction federal troops in the South were employed to enforce civil rights. — *PM*

EXTRA

New York Post BLUE FINAL

JFK SHOT TO DEATH

NOV. 22, 1963: JFK ASSASSINATED

Earlier editions of the paper had a cover story about soybean oil and a picture of JFK and Jackie happily greeting crowds at the Houston, Texas, airport on Page Five. Tragedy dominated the final edition — and history books. "President Kennedy was assassinated by a sniper today as he rode in triumph through downtown Dallas," The Post's Helen Dudar reported. "Cradling her husband's head in her arms and streaked with his blood, Mrs. Kennedy wept uncontrollably as the Presidential car sped through the crowds." A half hour later, JFK was declared dead and a "dazed" Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson was "elevated to the highest office in the land." — *Katherine Donlevy*

TURN TO PAGE 22

Whenever our American way of life has been threatened, we have responded to defend it — from our earliest days, to Abraham Lincoln (below) and the Civil War, and beyond, says President Donald Trump.

PHOTOS BY SPLASH NEWS. BETTMANN ARCHIVE. ADOBE STOCK.

One nation...

A letter from the Oval Office

BY PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

MY fellow Americans,

On this wonderful occasion of the 250th birthday of the United States of America, we celebrate our history, our heroes, our flag, our freedom, our unyielding spirit, and the promise of even more greatness that lies ahead.

We share a tradition of winning. This is what makes our country unique. We are winners.

This is what it means to be an American. And we knew how to win right from the start.

On the morning of April 19, 1775, hundreds of British soldiers in their bright red coats marched out of Boston to put down the colonial rebellion and arrest the rebel leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock.

The British moved in tight, disciplined columns, shoulder to shoulder, with drums beating and flags flying, just as they had been trained to do so well.

But along their 20-mile route were hundreds of farmers, blacksmiths and shopkeepers, ordinary men with rifles who fired on their oppressors from behind stone walls and trees, before melting back into the countryside.

The soldiers' red coats made perfect targets.

Their strict discipline and perfect formation became a death sentence against the unyielding spirit of resourceful and determined men defending their liberty.

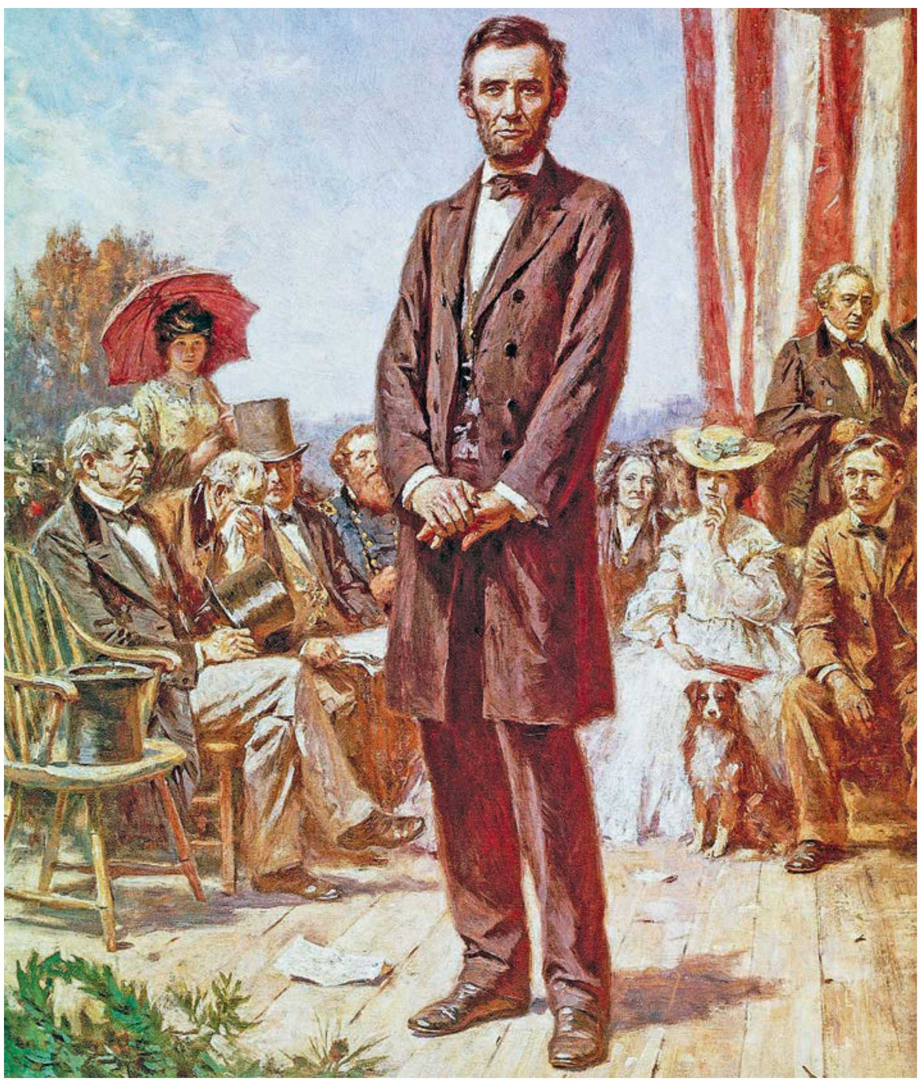
The Battles of Lexington and Concord marked the beginning of the American Revolutionary War and the dawn of the first light of American freedom that forever stands as a beacon of hope to the world.

Then came the Civil War, from 1861 to 1865, when brother fought brother in the bloodiest conflict in our history, the fight to abolish slavery.

You would never have heard of Abraham Lincoln if he had negotiated a deal and avoided the war, but it was not to be.

Our young nation faced its greatest test and emerged as a more perfect union.

Through courage, sacrifice and the unshakeable belief that all men are created equal, the United States was forged into one indivisible nation under God.



Our bountiful nation was built by generations of brave patriots who gave everything they had for our freedom and prosperity. They sacrificed their lives in battle; they laid the railroads and highways; they built the skyscrapers; they won two world wars; they dreamed big dreams; and they achieved the impossible, time and again.

In a spirit of generosity and with an expectation of cohesion, generations of Americans welcomed people from all corners of the globe to join them.

We all had winning and cohesion in common — but this is a warning: We must not lose the cohesion.

For the sake of America and the whole world, we must be strong, powerful and honest. We must have fair elections and a free and fair press, which we don't have right now.

We are one family and one nation. We salute the same beautiful Flag. We share the same glorious freedoms. And whenever our way of life has been threatened, we have responded.

We are Americans. We never give in, we never give up, and our country is only going to get better than ever before.

GREAT AMERICAN PRODUCTS

CREDIT CARDS: A credit card may seem like a simple piece of plastic, but it represents one of the most powerful tools and inventions in modern consumer life. Introduced widely in the mid-20th century, it democratized access to purchasing power — transforming the way people shop, dine and travel, and fueling an economy of continuous consumption. The credit card's current life in digital apps is a reminder that its evolution is far from over. — *JS*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

250 YEARS OF POST COVERS

NEW YORK POST
Our tsunami
FULL COVERAGE: PAGES 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9

AUG. 31, 2005:
HURRICANE KATRINA

Two days after Hurricane Katrina made landfall along the Gulf Coast as a Category Three storm, the Front Page read "Our tsunami" — the grim words of Biloxi, Miss., Mayor A.J. Holloway. The devastating cover image showed water cascading over a broken levee in New Orleans, where the storm surge waters reached 20 feet high and submerged 80% of the city. At that point, the death toll was in the hundreds, but the National Weather Service ultimately reported 1,833 fatalities, placing it among the five deadliest hurricanes to ever hit the US. A Mississippi man told The Post of his wife being swept away as they clung to each other on their roof. As she was lost to the floodwaters, she said to him, "Take care of the kids and the grandkids." — *AB*

NEW YORK POST
Page Six
LATE CITY FINAL
NYC declares emergency over coronavirus
Broadway goes dark
No gatherings of more than 500 people
NBA, NHL suspended, baseball postponed, NCAA tourney canceled
Sorry WE'RE CLOSED
PLUS: CONFUSION OVER TRUMP'S EUROPE BAN

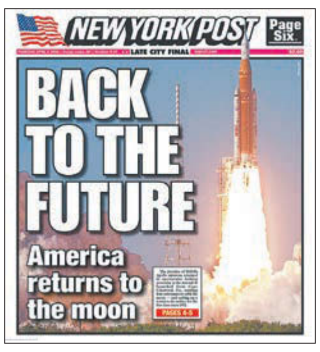
MARCH 13, 2020:
COVID SHUTDOWN

"There is no precedent for this in our history, in New York's history," said a "rattled" then-Mayor Bill de Blasio on March 12 as he declared a state of emergency amid the world's spiraling COVID-19 pandemic. The Post's cover featured the Empire State Building with a closed sign and noted that Broadway had gone dark, baseball had put a halt to spring training, the NBA and NHL had suspended their seasons and March Madness had been canceled. At that point, there were just 95 confirmed cases in the five boroughs. "It's going to get a lot worse before it's going to get better," de Blasio said. More than 47,000 New Yorkers and 1.1 million Americans would die from the virus in the first two years. — *BH*

NEW YORK POST
Page Six
LATE CITY FINAL
CHICAGO POPE
God Bless America! Leo XIV is first pontiff from the USA

MAY 9, 2025:
THE FIRST AMERICAN POPE

The Roman Catholic Church made history when the College of Cardinals elected Cardinal Robert Prevost of Chicago to succeed Pope Francis after his death April 21, 2025. For the first time, an American pope would lead the world's 1.4 billion Catholics. Appearing on the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica after white smoke rose above the Vatican, the new pope, who chose the name Leo XIV, greeted the crowd with the words, "Peace be with you all!," before delivering remarks in Italian and Spanish. In a column for The Post, Dan McLaughlin worried about Leo's progressive leanings, writing: "We hope and expect that popes show the humility to listen to the Holy Spirit and carry forward the teachings of the ages even in times when they are out of fashion." — *AZ*

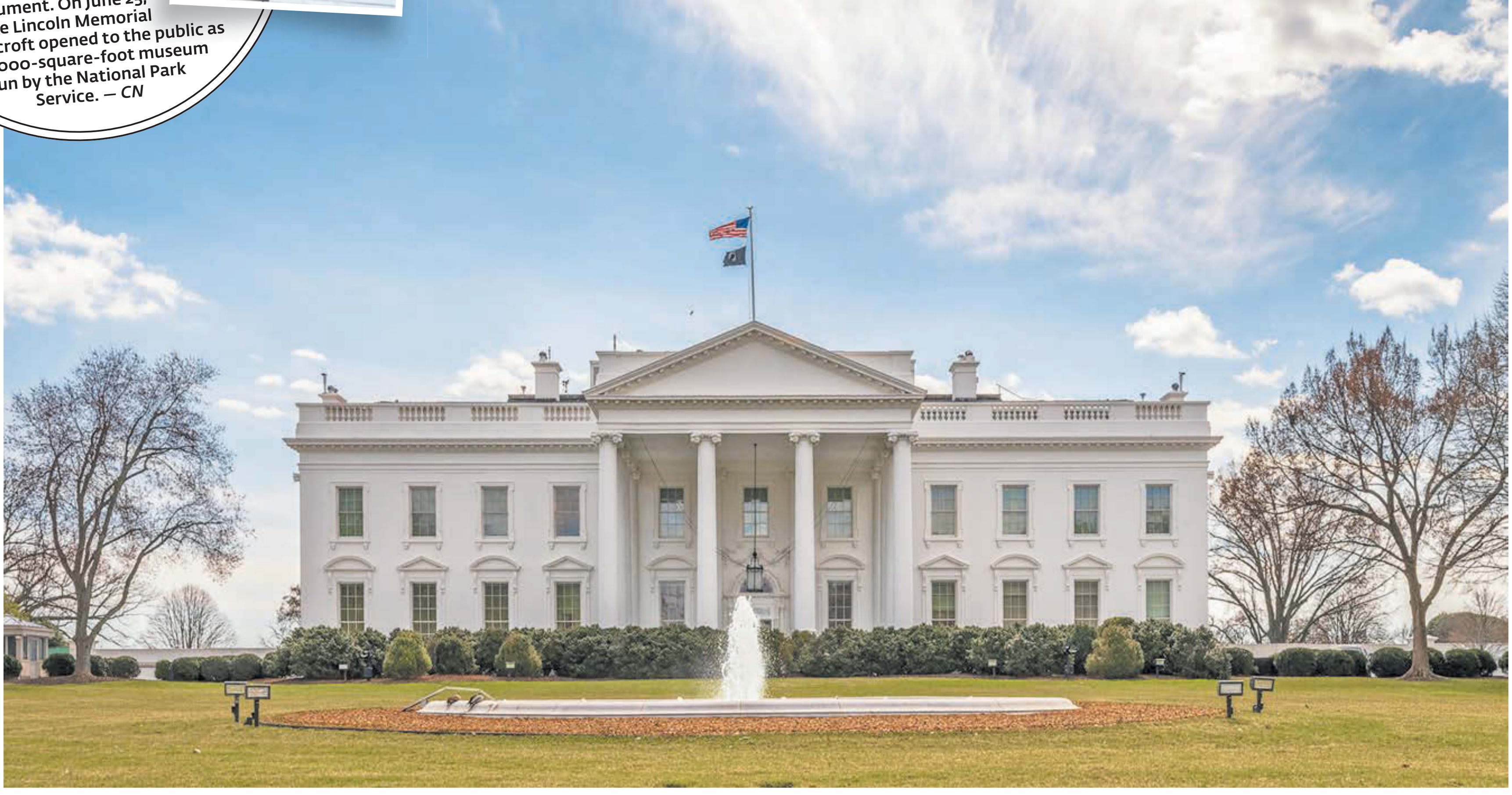


APRIL 2, 2026
ARTEMIS II LAUNCHES

The day after the Artemis II rocket successfully launched from Cape Canaveral, Fla. — "sending four astronauts to orbit the moon, and setting up a return to its surface for the first time since 1972" — the cover glowed with both nostalgia for America's space-race greatness and hope for future advancements. On April 10, astronauts Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch and Jeremy Hansen safely splashed down in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of San Diego, Calif, following a successful mission. The crew reached a point 248,655 miles from Earth — the farthest distance ever traveled by humans, breaking a previous record set by Apollo 13 in 1970. We "choose this moment to challenge this generation and the next to make sure this record is not long-lived," Hansen said. — *Hailey Eber*

AMERICAN ICONS

Because the Lincoln Memorial — designed by Henry Bacon and built between 1914 and 1922 — was constructed on reclaimed Potomac River marshland, workers had to sink massive concrete pillars into the bedrock to secure the foundation. This heavy engineering left a vast, hollow cavern beneath the monument. On June 25, 2026, the Lincoln Memorial Undercroft opened to the public as a 15,000-square-foot museum run by the National Park Service. — *CN*



The White House, the design of which was approved in 1792, has been renovated many times over the past 230 years, but it has held on to the principles George Washington envisioned for it.

Living history

The White House has always been the People's House

AS Americans gather on July 4, 2026, to celebrate the 250th birthday of our nation's independence, the White House remains both a living home and a dynamic stage for American democracy.

Perhaps no one has expressed the significance of this national symbol better than the late historian William Seale, who wrote, "Nearly two centuries of life and living link this house to the Founding Fathers . . . George Washington built it. This was his dream house. A dream house for a nation at that time raw and new but by no means secure . . . One of the greatest legacies of the White House is that it has remained a dream house, fresh and new for each presidential generation."

STEWART D. MCLAURIN

Seale's seminal architectural history, "The White House: The History of an American Idea" — just published in a new semiquincentennial edition by the White House Historical Association — shows that, despite physical changes to Washington's "dream house," the chief idea has never changed.

Before there was even a White House, or a Washington, DC, the president of the United States lived in New York City and Philadelphia, the first capital cities of the United States. It was in 1792 that George Washington approved James Hoban's design for the President's House, but the first president to take residence was John Adams, who arrived in 1800 as the plaster was still drying.

His prayer, immortalized with carving in the State Dining Room mantel, asks that heaven would bless the house and all those who would thereafter inhabit it — while his wife, First Lady Abigail Adams, saw the muddy construction site and proclaimed her new home as "capable of every improvement."

Destroyed in a fire set by invading British troops in 1814, the reconstructed President's House was reopened in 1818 by President James Monroe, who would soon add the South Portico. Over the next 200 years, the evolution continued, with the addition of a North Portico by Andrew Jackson, the building of the West Wing by President Theodore Roosevelt, the conversion of the attic to a third floor by President Calvin Coolidge and a complete gutting and modernization by President Harry Truman.

The much-publicized recent changes, of course, center on the East Side. It's important to remember that the East Wing was built and rebuilt several times in the 19th and 20th centuries before President Donald Trump set out to reimagine it with a large new ballroom. Ahead of the October 2025 demolition, the White House Historical Association documented the Franklin Roosevelt-era East Wing and the adjacent Jacqueline Kennedy Garden through state-of-the-art digital scans and photography, preserving the image in detail for historical context.

The history of the White House is a living history, and it is a subject that the White House Historical Association has been devoted to sharing with the American people since 1961. Those lucky enough to tour the building will quickly understand why Jacqueline Kennedy said, "Many First Families loved this house . . . and each and every one left something of themselves behind in it."

Today, the White House Collection holds more than 50,000 examples of furniture, lighting fixtures, rugs, china, glassware and flatware and more than 1,000 paintings, prints, drawings and sculptures. What amazing history is held in the Lincoln Bed, the Resolute Desk, the Treaty Table, the State China services and the portraits that line the walls, all providing a tangible connection to presidential life from 1776 to 2026.

President Jimmy Carter once remembered, "Whenever we had an exchange of conflicting ideas or views, which our family has always had at mealtimes, we would be sobered by the fact that we would always have a different president's china on the table. We would think of the lives of those who had used them: Adams and Jefferson, Lincoln, Jackson and Wilson, and many others. It was a constant daily reminder that we were sharing with them the history of a great country."

Visitors this semiquincentennial summer will step into the Entrance Hall where Thomas Jefferson displayed curiosities collected by Lewis and Clark on their western expedition. The tour continues through the East Room, where seven presidents have lain in state, and into the Red Room where Rutherford B. Hayes took the oath of office and through the Blue Room where President Grover Cleveland married Frances Folsom.

The Blue Room windows offer views of the South Lawn where Woodrow Wilson's sheep grazed during World War I and Herbert Hoover and his cabinet played games of Hoover Ball — which the Hoover Archives describe as a combination of tennis and volleyball played with a heavy medicine ball and concocted by the White House physician to keep the president physically fit.

The association's work during America's 250th anniversary extends beyond scholarship to a $150 million fund-raising campaign to support preservation, education and public engagement for the next 250 years. The White House is more than brick and stone; it is an idea. An American idea. And in 2026, that idea burns as brightly as the fireworks lighting our skies on the Fourth of July.

Stewart D. McLaurin is the president of the White House Historical Association and invites Americans visiting Washington, DC, to tour the innovative People's House: A White House Experience at 1700 Pennsylvania Avenue NW.

Scene of enlightenment

National Park Service could only happen in America

BY KEN ILGUNAS

IN the 1830s, artist George Catlin traveled the Great Plains and imagined a future in which Native Americans and bison might be protected together, "in all the wild and freshness of their nature's beauty," within what he called a "nation's Park."

For decades, the idea went nowhere. The bison were nearly driven to extinction, native peoples were pushed from much of their homelands, and the continent was surveyed, divided, fenced and tamed.

But the impulse to preserve did not go away. In 1872, Yellowstone became the world's first national park, set apart from settlement and sale for the "benefit and enjoyment of the people." Theodore Roosevelt, with his love of birds and bears and big country, brought presidential muscle and an almost American swagger to conservation, setting aside forests, refuges, parks and monuments across vast reaches of the country.

In 1916, Woodrow Wilson signed the act creating the National Park Service, giving the parks and monuments then under its care a purpose that still sounds impossibly utopian: to let Americans enjoy these places while leaving them "unimpaired" for those yet to come.

The idea kept evolving. Under Franklin Roosevelt, the Park Service became a guardian of national memory, taking in battlefields, memorials and historic sites. Later came seashores, recreation areas, urban refuges and, with the Alaska lands act of 1980, mountain ranges, river drainages and intact ecosystems — with legal recognition, this time, for the subsistence uses of native and rural peoples.

From South Florida to the Alaskan Arctic, the Park Service protects more than 85 million acres and 433 park units. The numbers are impressive, but what matters is that America learned, just in time, to see certain natural features not as raw material, but as monuments already made.

Europe has its cathedrals and coliseums, its marbled gods and stone arches, its marvels of empire and engineering. America's finest monuments are less built than preserved: Smoky Mountains left unlogged, the Grand Canyon left undammed, the Everglades left undrained, Joshua trees left standing, the Noatak River allowed to keep its unruly course.

The Old World raised its wonders with stone and scaffolding. We preserved ours by doing what empires are not known for doing: nothing.

ZION
NATIONAL
PARK
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

The parks belong in the company of our grand national achievements, though they were made not by conquering, building or launching ourselves skyward, but by looking at the natural world and deciding, against every human instinct, to leave it alone. They remind us that we have taken, and can again take, the high-minded and rarely traveled route of restraint. They are proof of our ability to think not only of ourselves, but of generations yet to come, and of the wild creatures with whom we share the continent.

The parks are monuments of our enlightenment, peaks of our humanity and refuges that evoke human experiences that are getting harder to come by in modern life: wonder, contemplation, fear, awe, invigoration or just the common daydream.

The United States is now 250 years old. It took almost a hundred years to make our first park, and Catlin's original idea is still unfinished. The next hundred years may push us toward more rewilding, more connected landscapes, more ocean parks, more room for species to move and more ways for people to live with wildness instead of merely visiting it.

In the national parks, we see not only our best ideas but one of our noblest selves: a people armed with the tools to tame, fence and cut down a continent, but wise enough, at times, to let parts of it remain open, shared and wild.

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PHOTOS BY ADOBE STOCK; GETTY IMAGES (2).

Coming in first

These front-runners blazed trails for the American sports we know and love

BY WILL ZIMMERMAN

LONG before they became institutions, America's favorite games were experiments — new leagues, new tournaments, new ideas. These 10 firsts laid the foundation for the sports that drive us to eat, sleep and breathe our fandom.

1. THE FIRST MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL GAME (1876)

Baseball was America's most popular professional team sport by the 1870s, but plagued by folding franchises, disputed contracts and inconsistent schedules. The National League, launched in 1876, was designed to impose stability. Multiple contests were played on Opening Day, April 22, though the Boston Red Caps' 6-5 victory over the Philadelphia Athletics is most commonly cited as the first game in modern major league history. When the rival American League arrived in 1901, the two circuits eventually joined forces, contesting the first World Series in 1903 and forming the foundation of today's Major League Baseball.

2. THE FIRST US OPEN: TENNIS (1881)

The Newport Casino in Rhode Island played host to the first US National Championship, renamed the US Open in 1968. Twenty-five men competed in the tournament, with their play accompanied by a string quartet. Atop the grass courts — today the site of the International Tennis Hall of Fame — Richard Sears, a 19-year-old Harvard student, staked his claim as the first Singles champion. Sears would go on to win the tournament every year through 1887, for a total of 18 straight matches.

3. THE FIRST US OPEN: GOLF (1895)

For his victory in the inaugural US Open, Englishman Horace Rawlins, 21, received a gold medal and $150. The tournament was held Oct. 4, 1895, on the nine-hole course of the Newport Golf Club in Rhode Island, where competitors played four rounds in a single day. Rawlins, employed by the club as an assistant professional, shot 173 to beat fellow Brit Willie Dunn by two strokes. Of the 10 golfers to compete, just one, Canadian Andrew Smith, hailed from outside the United Kingdom. The following year, John Shippen became the first American to play in the tournament.

4. THE FIRST PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL GAME (1920)

The National Football League traces its origins to Triangle Park, a stretch of grass 3 miles north of Columbus, Ohio. In the first contest between two teams in the American Professional Football Association — renamed to the National Football League in 1922 — the Dayton Triangles defeated the Columbus Panhandles, 14-0. There was no national media attention nor radio broadcast. Dayton's roster was composed of factory workers, while Columbus' team were laborers on the Panhandle section of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Over the next century, the NFL would rise from a loose collection of industrial-town teams into America's preeminent league.

5. AMERICA'S FIRST PROFESSIONAL HOCKEY GAME (1924)

The National Hockey League was founded in 1917 in Canada, and its first American team — the Boston Bruins — didn't join until 1924. These Bruins hosted the debut NHL game on American soil on Dec. 1, 1924, at Boston Arena, where they bested the Montreal Maroons 2-1. The Boston Post likened the physical play to "football tactics," while the Boston Globe questioned whether the sport had a future: "It's hard to say just how well professional hockey will go in this city." More than a century — and six championships — later, the Bruins remain one of the league's most iconic franchises.

6. THE FIRST NCAA BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT (1939)

The Oregon Webfoots were the last team left standing at the conclusion of the first Big Dance. En route to the title, the "Tall Firs" first defeated Texas, then Oklahoma before, in the March 27 championship game at Northwestern's Patten Gymnasium, beating Ohio State, 46-33. Afterward, the Webfoots were presented with a broken trophy — disfigured after star player Bobby Anet tipped it over in pursuit of a loose ball along the sidelines. The first tournament drew just eight teams selected by regional committees from across the country, with several schools, including Dartmouth and Bradley, declining invitations.

7. AMERICA'S FIRST PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL GAME (1949)

Just as the NFL began as the APFA, the NBA began as the BAA, the Basketball Association of America. In the league's first game, held at Toronto's Maple Leaf Gardens, the New York Knickerbockers beat the Toronto Huskies, 68-66. The Knicks' Ossie Schectman scored the game's first basket, a give-and-go layup. Scraping for an audience, the Huskies offered tickets priced between 75 cents and $2.50 — with free admission for anyone taller than Toronto's big man, 6-foot-8 George Nostrand. But if any fans claimed the offer, history has no record.

8. SUPER BOWL I (1967)

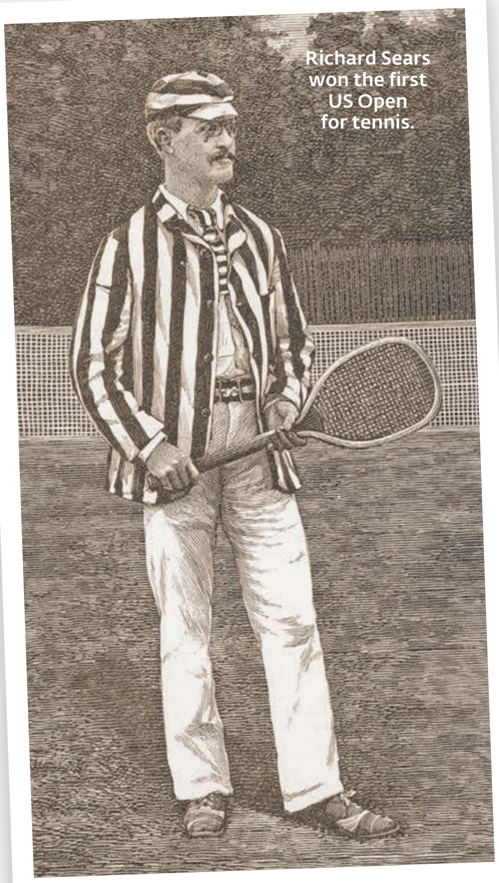
Football's first championship came nearly 50 years after the sport's first game. The AFL-NFL World Championship Game — retroactively known as Super Bowl I — took place at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum on Jan. 15, 1967. It was the product of a merger agreement between two rival leagues that had spent years battling for players, fans and television audiences. With a halftime performance from the University of Arizona marching band, in front of a stadium only two-thirds full despite tickets costing just $12, Bart Starr's Green Bay Packers defeated the Kansas City Chiefs, 35-10. The game, simulcast on CBS and NBC, garnered nearly 50 million viewers; the most recent Super Bowl on NBC averaged about 125 million.

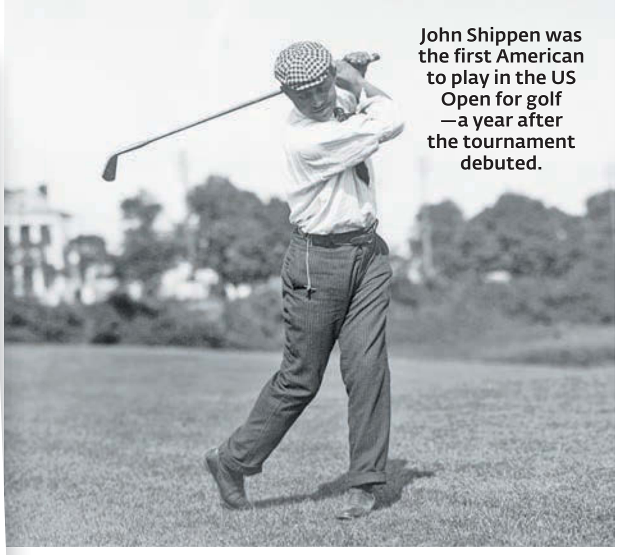
9. PASSAGE OF TITLE IX (1972)

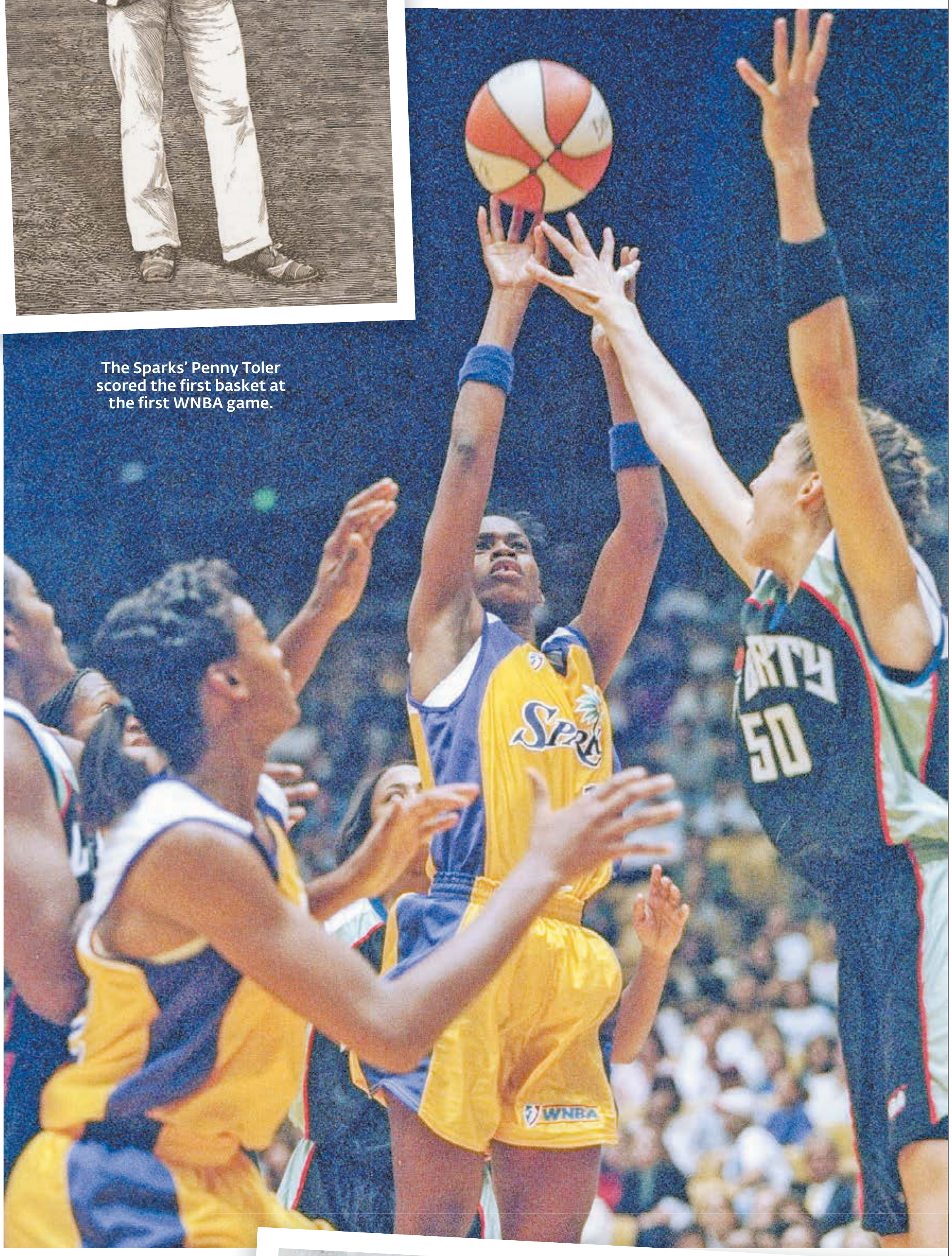
With just 37 words, Title IX changed everything: "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." The federal civil rights law, passed in 1972, was America's first real guarantee of equal opportunities for women — and sports was its most visible consequence, with proportional funding for facilities, coaching and scholarships. In 1971, about 30,000 women competed in college sports; as of 2024, that number has increased more than 700% to over 242,000.

10. FIRST WNBA GAME (1997)

The Women's National Basketball Association tipped off on June 21, 1997, when more than 14,000 fans filled the Great Western Forum in Inglewood, Calif., to watch the New York Liberty down the Los Angeles Sparks, 75-57. The Sparks' Penny Toler made the league's first basket, and the game featured two of the WNBA's great centers, Lisa Leslie (Sparks) and Rebecca Lobo (Liberty) — who told ESPN that the magnitude of the day hit her when she spotted herself on a billboard from the airport to the Forum. But not everything went off without a hitch: Jeffrey Osborne was set to sing the national anthem but got stuck in traffic and missed his spot.

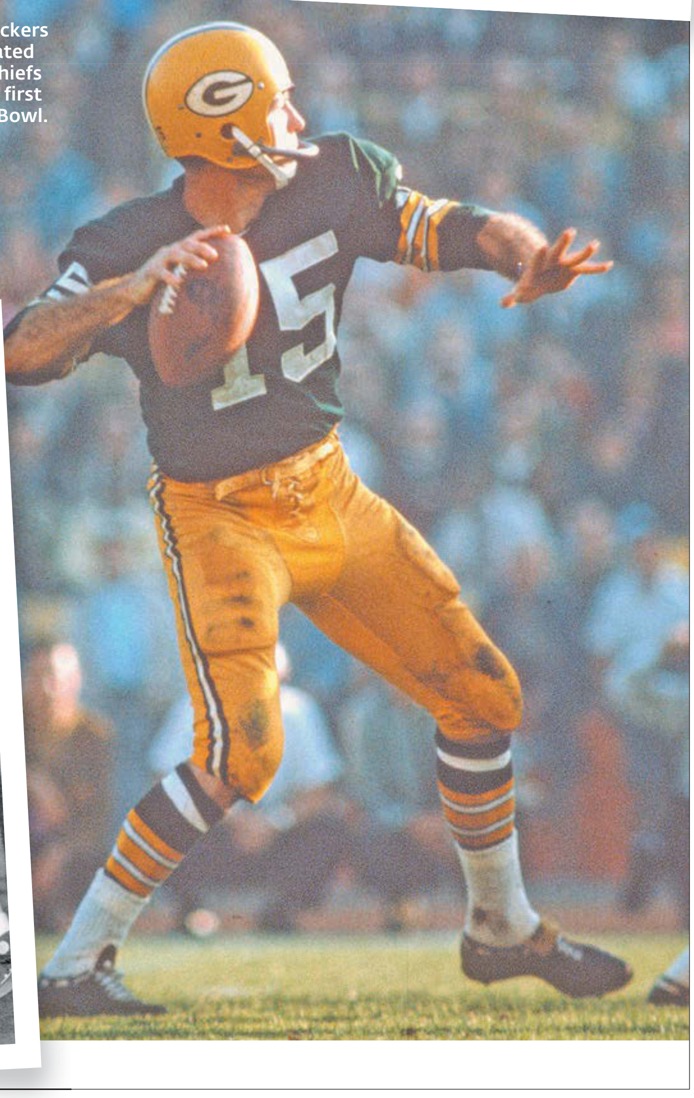

Richard Sears won the first US Open for tennis.

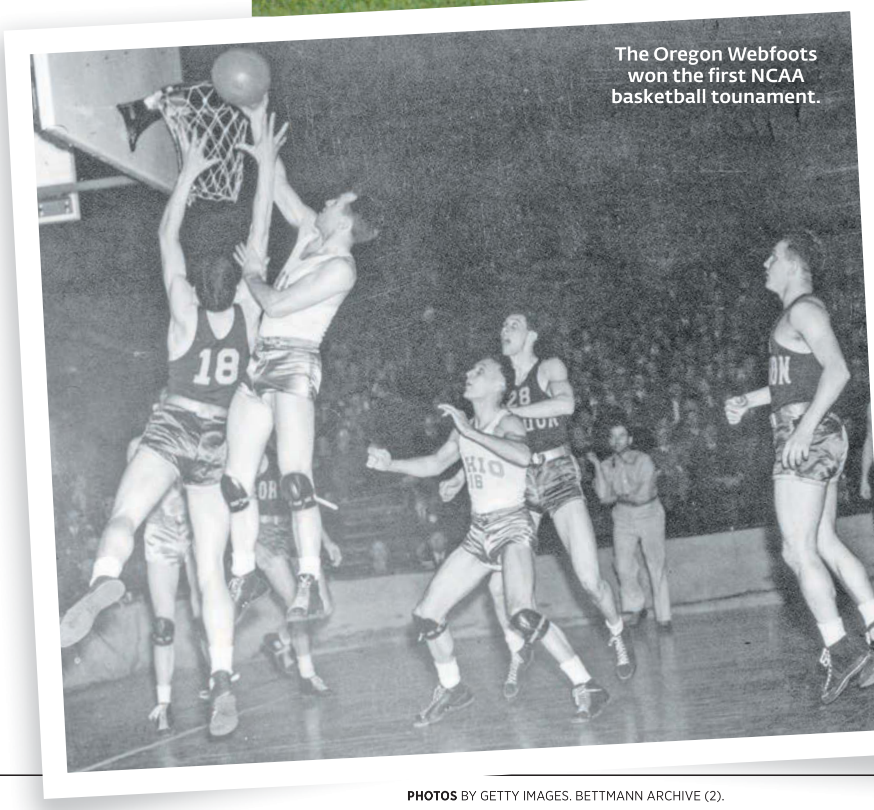

John Shippen was the first American to play in the US Open for golf —a year after the tournament debuted.


The Sparks' Penny Toler scored the first basket at the first WNBA game.

Brandi Chastain, seen here at the 1999 Women's World Cup, is one of many to benefit from Title IX.

In the first NHL game in America, the Boston Bruins (pictured) beat the Montreal Maroons.


Tha Packers defeated the Chiefs at the first Super Bowl.


The Oregon Webfoots won the first NCAA basketball tounament.

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GREAT AMERICAN PRODUCTS

NIKE & JUST DO IT: Created by Phil Knight and University of Oregon track coach Bill Bowerman in 1964, Nike went on to launch its "Just Do It" campaign in 1988, turning that phrase into an attitude. If Coca-Cola was America's happiness, Nike was its restless ambition. Those three words refuted all excuses. It was a call to action over thought. Even if Air Jordans didn't allow the wearer to dunk, they imbued the power to work just as hard as their namesake did. In doing so, Nike helped pioneer a new kind of branding, in which a slogan, a symbol and a mindset could sell the product without even showing it. *— JS*